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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 24 September 1990, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. ASAMOAH (Vice-President)	(Ghana)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)

- General debate [9] (continued)
- Address by Mr. Rabbie Namaliu, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea
- Address by Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis

Statements made by

Mr. Cavallo (Argentina)
Mr. Velayati (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr. Alatas (Indonesia)
Mr. Niehaus Quesada (Costa Rica)
Mr. Rivera Irias (Guatemala)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE RABBIE NAMALIU, PRIME MINISTER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Rabbie Namaliu, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency the Right Honourable Rabbie Namaliu, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. NAMALIU (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that with your able leadership and guidance the Assembly will deal with its work in a positive and constructive manner. I also wish to place on record my country's appreciation of the contribution made by your predecessor, Major-General Joseph Garba of Nigeria, to the work of the Assembly last year.

We acknowledge that the world of today is highly volatile and interdependent, and the need for an organization such as the United Nations is more important today than ever before. New challenges are now being faced within the framework of the United Nations system. The United Nations, we believe, provides the appropriate forum for the international community to solve problems through consultation and dialogue, without the need to resort to violence. The achievements, over the years, of the United Nations system are commendable, particularly in the areas of disarmament, decolonization, the environment, economic development, social justice

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and the maintenance of world peace. The United Nations can contribute further to international stability and social harmony, but this can occur only through goodwill and with the tolerance and understanding of all member nations. Papua New Guinea is committed to the United Nations and what it represents, and will continue to play its part in achieving world peace and harmony.

Complex problems and challenges continue to face us this year, but the Assembly is convening at a time of great hope, a time of profound changes in relationships between nations. We have witnessed a marked improvement in East-West relations, particularly between the super-Powers. The era of the cold war is vanishing, bringing hope, opportunity and, for some, uncertainty. Massive shifts in the world political order will invariably be reflected in changing economic relationships.

We acknowledge with satisfaction the comprehensive report by the Secretary-General, particularly with regard to the United Nations involvement in the achievement of independence for Namibia and progress in negotiations for peaceful settlements of regional conflicts in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Central America, South Africa and, more recently, the Persian Gulf. The report also addresses other pressing issues such as human rights, drugs, disarmament, the environment, trade, finance and debt servicing.

Although major conflicts and tensions may appear to be peripheral to us in the South Pacific, we are not immune to their effects. We feel their impact on our economy, our international obligations and our moral convictions.

I speak today in full awareness of the international media publicity, both positive and adverse, that Papua New Guinea has attracted over the past two years. The increased activity in our petroleum and mining sectors, the closure of the Bougainville copper mine in May last year and the subsequent unrest in that

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province of our country have focused attention on Papua New Guinea. Unfortunately for Papua New Guinea, the Bougainville and law-and-order crises have tended to attract more attention than the many positive developments taking place in the country. Like many developing countries we have our share of problems, and we are addressing them with energy and determination. Initiatives have been taken by my Government to promote economic growth, to further develop education and training opportunities, particularly in tertiary and technical areas, and to generate employment and income opportunities. At the same time, we are developing the capacity of the public service and strengthening law-enforcement agencies.

As a result of the closure of Bougainville mine, my Government, with the help of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international and national aid agencies, has developed an integrated structural adjustment programme to assist Papua New Guinea through a difficult series of short-term problems. Among other things, the programme will ensure that major resources are progressively developed for the benefit of the country and its people.

A first round of negotiations with Bougainville leaders produced an accord and the basis for the restoration of services by the national Government to that troubled island. My Government is committed to continued peaceful dialogue with the people of Bougainville so that together we can achieve an amicable settlement of the crisis and a return to normalcy.

The South Pacific Community is made up predominantly of small, island States, scattered throughout a vast ocean. For a long time our interests and well-being have been accorded the lowest priority by world military and economic Powers. We are vitally concerned about our region. Like others, we in the Pacific wish to develop under conditions of peace and security. Most Pacific nations depend on a small number of agricultural and marine products for their livelihood and export

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income. For these reasons we concluded the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, and the Convention for the Prohibition of Drift-Net Fishing in the South Pacific. We therefore strongly deplore nuclear activities and the dumping of toxic wastes, which threaten our fragile ecosystems. We also view with deep concern wanton exploitation of our resources.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also ushers in the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Papua New Guinea urges that the process of decolonization should be accelerated and strengthened as part of the present favourable disposition surrounding the work of the United Nations. We are pleased that positive measures are continually being pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities to provide a framework for a peaceful evolution of the Territory towards an act of self-determination and independence. We urge that any act of self-determination should be consistent with United Nations principles and practices, and that all options, including independence, should be open.

(Mr. Namaliu, Papua New Guinea)

In order that a well-informed decision may be made, the Administering Authority and others should further expand their assistance for education and training, in particular for the Kanak population.

New Caledonia is on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to continue to monitor developments in New Caledonia. It is our express hope that the Administering Authority will facilitate regular visits to New Caledonia by inviting visiting missions of the United Nations.

Apart from New Caledonia, there are other Pacific islands still under the shackles of colonialism. It is our hope that the Administering Authorities concerned will accord genuine self-determination to these countries.

We in the Pacific have always been aware of the importance of protecting the environment. Indeed, the cultural and physical survival of many of our countries depends on the proper management of that environment. The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, to which I referred earlier, is a clear indication of the importance we attach to this issue.

We are greatly concerned that, in spite of ominous warnings about the future of the Earth, expected climatic changes and predictions of dramatic rises in the level of the sea, gases responsible for the greenhouse effect continue to be emitted without strict regulation.

It is our fervent hope that countries, particularly industrialized countries, will effect significant cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases, including the establishment of obligatory emission reduction standards.

We continue to oppose the disposal of toxic waste at sea unless it conforms with standards prescribed under the London dumping convention.

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The United States has taken stringent precautions in destroying chemical weapons on Johnston atoll. We take little comfort in suggestions that Johnston atoll should be the permanent disposal site for the American chemical weapons destruction programme. We urge the United States not to use the facility as a permanent site for the disposal of chemical weapons and toxic waste, and express our firm belief that it should be closed down once the current operations have been completed. We will also continue strongly to oppose French nuclear testing at Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls.

Pacific islanders have close affinity to the sea, and their dependence upon its resources needs no emphasis. Papua New Guinea is, therefore, pleased with the progress made on the elimination of driftnet fishing.

We welcome the decision taken by Japan to cease driftnetting a year in advance of the date stipulated in resolution 44/225. We urge the Government of Japan and other distant water fishing nations to enter into negotiations with us on access arrangements.

Papua New Guinea's desire to participate meaningfully in the resolution of regional problems brings us into regular interaction with member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN has taken many important initiatives, particularly in the South-East Asian region, which we have fully supported.

We would like to acknowledge with satisfaction the leading role that both the Soviet Union and the United States have played, in recent years, to reduce tensions in the world. Their efforts and those of other States in the United Nations Security Council deserve our full support. Papua New Guinea is aware that progress made in the search for solutions to problems in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, the Middle East, the Korean peninsula and southern Africa is directly

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related to the convergence of views between the super-Powers and the permanent members of the Security Council.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the announcement by Viet Nam to withdraw its troops completely from Cambodia. We commend the efforts of the ASEAN group of countries, Australia and the United Nations Security Council in devising a united formula for the resolution of the Cambodian problem. Papua New Guinea believes that United Nations involvement is necessary in order to ensure free and fair elections in Cambodia.

In the Korean peninsula, my Government looks forward to the re-unification of North and South Korea. We support initiatives by both nations towards a peaceful re-unification of their people, and urge them to continue on the path of reconciliation. In the mean time, we support the admission of both North and South Korea to the United Nations as full Members. We believe this will facilitate dialogue and hasten the re-unification process.

The question of Western Sahara appears to be nearing resolution. The Secretary-General's settlement proposals, announced on 11 August 1988, offer the chance to resolve this thorny issue once and for all. Members of the United Nations have a responsibility to see that the people of Western Sahara are able to exercise their right to self-determination. Thus, the organization and the supervision of a referendum by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity must be allowed to take place.

The situation in the Middle East continues to cause us grave concern. My Government has always maintained that the Palestinians have a right to a homeland, just as much as Israel has a right to exist within secure borders. These two conditions appear to be prerequisites if a lasting solution to this problem is to be achieved.

(Mr. Namaliu, Papua New Guinea)

We have always strongly condemned the use of force as a means of solving disputes and, in this context, Papua New Guinea continues to be alarmed at and condemns Iraq's invasion and continued occupation of Kuwait since 2 August 1990. As a Member of the United Nations, my Government is committed to supporting the trade and economic embargo against Iraq sponsored by the United Nations Security Council. We urge all members of this Assembly to continue to co-operate in seeking a peaceful solution to this crisis.

My Government believes strongly that international pressure and sanctions have resulted in the gradual dismantling of the apartheid system. Developments in South Africa offer reason for guarded optimism. After years of oppression and injustice, the creation of a genuine non-racial democracy may at last be a real possibility. We have a continuing responsibility to encourage the process of reconciliation and democratic reconstruction.

We are saddened by the recent riots in the black townships involving the rival groups of the African National Congress (ANC) and Zulu Inkatha movements, which have left so many people dead. It is our firm conviction that sanctions should be continued until apartheid is completely dismantled.

Papua New Guinea applauds the achievement of Namibia's independence and commends all parties who were involved in this exercise.

There are many changes taking place in the world economy today. The move towards a single-market Europe in 1992, regional initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Group and the shift by Eastern European countries towards market-oriented economies have serious implications for the developing countries.

(Mr. Namaliu, Papua New Guinea)

The continuing global economic recession has had a considerable adverse impact on the economic and social well-being of all nations. Inflation, high interest rates, exchange-rate instability, rising unemployment, slow growth and protectionism have all taken their toll on our national economies.

On the positive side, Eastern Europe's economic transition could offer new opportunities for developing economies through increased demand for their commodities. We believe that closer co-operation between developed and developing countries is now more important than ever. The benefits from new markets in Eastern Europe need to be evenly shared if open trading relations are to be maintained. The possible harmful impact on the financial resources available to the developing world must be minimized.

The formation of the Asia-Pacific economic co-operation group is intended to develop closer co-operation between countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and also to accommodate developments taking place in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

The Lomé IV Convention, which was signed on 15 December 1989, contains new concepts and ideas, which make it different from the three preceding arrangements. Lomé IV contains increased financial packages for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and includes new provisions for structural adjustments and assistance to ACP countries facing severe balance-of-payments difficulties.

It is of considerable importance to ACP countries that the levels of development assistance agreed to in Lomé IV remain unaffected by the opening up of Eastern Europe to wider contacts in the rest of the world. Any adjustment or restructuring of the world trading and financial system must not adversely affect the position of the developing countries. The shifting of focus, as well as the diversion of financial resources for developed countries to Eastern Europe, would greatly disadvantage the economies of the developing countries, whose claims to a

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more equitable distribution of the world's resources have been outstanding for decades.

It is important that an open world trading system be maintained if economic prosperity is to be distributed fairly.

A strengthened General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is essential if we are to provide a stable framework for the expansion of trade, and to make possible the full integration of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as developing countries, into the global economy. We believe that the highest priority on the international economic agenda is the need for a successful outcome to the Uruguay Round of talks at the end of this year. Difficult political decisions will have to be taken in order to achieve far-reaching and substantive results from all the items to be discussed at the Uruguay Round.

The remarkable political and economic changes that are taking place between the super-Powers in respect of Central and Eastern Europe, and those that are taking place in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East and elsewhere, point to the emergence of a new world order, with shiftng alliances and economic groupings. Papua New Guinea is confident that the United Nations will address these issues and devise measures that will allow Member States to cope with the uncertainties that lie ahead.

We continue to support the United Nations in its unique role in the resolution of conflict, and in the building of a strong framework for international co-operation. Over the years we have supported the work of the United Nations because we believe it to be vital to the continuing development of a peaceful and prosperous world community.

Finally, we assure you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General of our continued support for efforts to maintain and develop the work of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Rabbie Namaliu, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.

ADDRESS BY MR. KENNEDY A. SIMMONDS, PRIME MINISTER OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, and in inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I welcome this opportunity to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of Saint Kitts and Nevis on your election to the eminent post of President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your election is a clear reflection of the high esteem in which you are held and of the complete confidence placed in you by your colleagues. My delegation is particularly pleased to welcome you to this position as the representative of a fellow island nation, and pledges its fullest co-operation as you guide the critical deliberations of this body.

I also express hearty congratulations to the outgoing President of the General Assembly for his skilful guidance of the Assembly through the critical issues that commanded its attention during the last session.

It is with a profound sense of admiration that I pay a tribute also to our distinguished Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his untiring efforts to bring about the peaceful resolution of the dangerous conflicts that beset the world community.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

On behalf of our delegation, I extend a warm welcome to the Organization's newest Member State, Liechtenstein, which has supplanted Saint Kitts and Nevis as the smallest nation in the United Nations. This addition to our membership emphasizes that the United Nations is alive and vibrant and provides the opportunity for all countries, great and small, to contribute to the making of a better world.

I address this Assembly just five days after the seventh anniversary of the independence of my country. My Government, from the outset, established as its primary objective - its raison d'être - the improvement of the quality of life of our people.

In pursuit of this mission, we set ourselves certain sectoral objectives, which included: enhancement of the rate of economic growth; continuation of our programme of economic diversification, and the general transformation of the structure of the economy so that the rate of economic growth might be stable and sustainable over the long term; containment of the rate of inflation; provision of increased employment opportunities for our people; satisfaction of the health, nutritional, educational, housing and other socio-cultural needs of our people; and provision and maintenance of an adequate physical infrastructure for the convenience of the public at large, and to facilitate trade, industry, tourism and agricultural development.

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These are objectives with which every member nation of the Assembly can identify and which they can readily support. They are objectives which every small developing country in the world would hold dear. Until recently the odds against a small developing country achieving sustained success in realizing all of these basic and essential objectives were monumental. Until recently super-Power tensions and the arms race, regional conflicts, ideological divisions all conspired to divert the attention of the world away from the plight of the poor and disadvantaged people everywhere.

Then suddenly hope burst upon the world like a flower in bloom. The two super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - embraced, and the world breathed a sigh of relief. Freedom began bursting out all over, and in Latin America and in Eastern Europe democracy descended like rain upon a thirsty land. The Berlin Wall, like the wall of Jericho, came tumbling down; and Germany, so long divided, now stands upon the threshold of reunification, a beacon of hope for all divided people to follow.

While the prospect of peace around the world would obviously be welcomed by all nations, amongst developing countries, and more so among island developing countries like Saint Kitts and Nevis, there was a special feeling of elation. We felt that at last the developed countries would be able to focus their attention seriously on the plight of the developing nations. We were of the view that small island developing countries would now be seen and appreciated as presenting very difficult problems peculiar to their geographical status and that, at last, a universal effort could be focused on finding and implementing lasting solutions to these problems.

This was the time for the massive resources which hitherto were going into the production and proliferation of nuclear, conventional, chemical or bacterial

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weapons of destruction to be diverted on a grand scale into a new world war - a war on the production, trafficking and use of narcotic drugs, a war on atmospheric, marine and land-based pollution, a war on under-development, a war on disease, illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. This should have been a global war waged under the banner of the United Nations, and with the full support of its entire membership. This was the time for nations to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Once again the attention of the world community has been diverted by conflict. Once again we are brought face to face with the reality that conflicts and global tensions are the enemies of development.

The invasion and occupation of Kuwait, a Member country of the United Nations, by Iraq is an illegal act of aggression. My Government joins in the world-wide condemnation of this illegal act and further supports the United Nations resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. We recommend that every effort be exploited to bring this crisis to a peaceful resolution.

This crisis in the Gulf highlights again the vulnerability of small States. We are not only at the mercy of the elements, but we face the risk of being swallowed up by larger and more powerful nations. Our only protection against this eventuality is either the military support of friendly neighbours or the indignation and punitive sanctions of the international community.

Our vulnerability is further demonstrated by the seriously adverse impact which this crisis is having on the economy of our country in that fuel prices have skyrocketed; the cost of generating electricity has escalated significantly and, hence, the cost of pumping water from our wells has also risen; and, inevitably,

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the cost of imports has risen, leading to a greater outflow of foreign-exchange earnings, while at the same time assistance from the industrialized countries will no doubt be further decreased.

I applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General to endeavour to find a peaceful solution and trust that he will succeed.

In the light of the present crisis it almost seems pointless to seek to address all the issues of concern to my country as well as to other developing countries. It is difficult to avoid wondering if anyone in the developed countries would be listening at this time. However, the issue of development and the environment is so fundamental to the achievement of our improved quality of life that I must address it and hope that my message will be heard.

First, I wish to commend the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as they continue to provide our countries with desired technical assistance in such environmental development programmes as water-quality protection, water and sanitation, sustainable agriculture and aquaculture.

I also wish to applaud the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which held its first session in Nairobi in August this year. I congratulate the Government and people of Kenya as the proud hosts of this symbolic first session. Saint Kitts and Nevis will follow the work of the Committee and would wish to participate in the plans of action that derive from its work.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

My Government and people would greatly value the assistance and collaboration of UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to promote environmental education and training for the 1990s in our schools and to incorporate environmental literacy into our national strategies for educational advancement.

It is clear that the world is more sensitive today to issues relating to the environment. This is the case to such an extent that many projects in developing countries are either delayed or denied because either the industrialized countries or the multilateral agencies have concerns about the impact of these projects on the environment. Philosophically, this may seem to be a reasonable approach. However, it must be viewed against the background that most, if not all, of the problems we worry about today are caused by the industrialized countries, which, in order to achieve their developmental objectives, place development first and the environment last, and sometimes nowhere at all.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

We hear about the greenhouse effect now because the industrialized countries have been cutting down their forests for decades. It is they who accumulate nuclear waste and toxic waste. It is they who have polluted rivers and seas. Some animal-rights groups will malign the good name of a whole nation of farmers whose crops are systematically destroyed by monkeys, leading to extreme frustration, loss of income, a depressed and disenchanted sector and depletion of foreign exchange.

We must be rational in our approach to the environment. Sustained development and effective environmental protection must be complementary and not competitive. Linkages must be forged between industry and environmental protection to attain an improved quality of life. In short, the environment must not be used as a scapegoat or as an excuse further to stultify the aspirations of developing countries.

Now that the industrialized countries have achieved outstanding levels of development, the environment notwithstanding - and we all share the adverse effects - they should be prepared immediately to make additional resources available to developing countries for the protection of the environment, while ensuring that projects designed to achieve sustained and sustainable development can proceed.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis we place a high premium on the implementation of land-use policies that would enhance food production, ensure food security and improved nutrition, and thus improve health and industry.

We are striving now to diversify our formerly monocultural economy. Tourism is an important part of that programme. It is clear that if our tourism industry is to grow and contribute meaningfully to the economy, then as island communities we must protect the seas and oceans which give life to our important marine resources and our coastal areas. The prevention and clean-up of ocean pollution, however, require international co-operation and the willingness of the

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international community to respond quickly to calls for assistance. The whole issue of the environment is a major subject which can be properly addressed by developing countries only with assistance from the United Nations and also directly from the developed countries.

Another area of grave concern in relation to our quality-of-life objective is the serious harm that illicit narcotic drugs can cause to this and succeeding generations of young people. Our determination as a nation to fight the menace of drugs remains strong and unswerving. We have tightened law enforcement and enacted stiffer penalties. We have benefited in a small measure from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) in areas of law enforcement and training. We require more assistance in reducing demand through preventive education, health care and rehabilitation. There is a need for continued international co-operation to combat the cultivation and trafficking of these illicit substances, to eliminate the demand, to intensify efforts in the field of public information, health and education, and to develop programmes for rehabilitation.

The drug traffickers, the narco-terrorists, must be stopped at all costs. They must no longer be allowed to terrorize the lives of our young people, threaten the security of the region, subvert our youth, rape our society and retard the future of generations. The global war against drugs must be declared during this forty-fifth session and all our Governments and peoples must enlist.

Although the current tensions continue to dominate our consciousness, and indeed hang like a pall over our deliberations, we must not forget the progress that the Organization has helped to make.

I welcome a free Namibia into the family of the United Nations. I pay tribute to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which played a vital

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role in the Namibian electoral process, facilitating a fundamental improvement in Namibia's political climate, setting the stage for the reality of free and fair elections, and reflecting the commitment of the Namibian people to independence. The struggle was hard and long and the freedom of Namibia today is a tribute to the people of Namibia and to this family of nations.

Even in South Africa a glimmer of hope has lit the scene. My Government and people welcome with great joy the release of Nelson Mandela. We marvel at his remarkable fortitude and his eschewing of bitterness in spite of the enormity of his ordeal. Clearly Mandela's release, the unbanning of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), and the start of dialogue all represent encouraging signs that change may well be on the horizon in South Africa. We are saddened by the violence in the black townships of South Africa. That must not, however, be taken as an excuse to maintain the status quo.

We in Saint Kitts and Nevis will not be, and we call upon all nations not to allow themselves to be, lulled into tacit acceptance of apartheid by token gestures of conciliation. Apartheid is an evil and abhorrent system which propounds the superiority of one man over another based on the colour of his skin. There can be no compromise with apartheid. All men are created equal - that is a universal truth. It is only by the elimination of apartheid that South Africa can hope to re-enter the family of nations. My country, Saint Kitts and Nevis, while recognizing that progress has been made, calls for the maintenance of all sanctions against South Africa until apartheid is dismantled. We commend the United Nations Declaration on South Africa, of December 1989, and recommend that the international community continue to assist the South African people and support the front-line States.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

It is cause for deep concern that peace and justice continue to elude the people of Cambodia. The people of that war-torn country must be allowed to enjoy the right to self-determination without external interference. We continue to demand that all foreign troops be removed from Cambodia and that any such withdrawal be verified and ensured by the presence of an international peace-keeping force. We call for dialogue between all parties in Cambodia to continue until a settlement is reached, and my Government is of the view that in the interim the status of Cambodia at the United Nations should not be changed.

Closer to home in our Caribbean region we are deeply concerned about the unstable situation which continues to exist in Haiti. Clearly, political events have made it difficult for meaningful economic development to proceed. We in the region will continue to support all efforts to facilitate the holding of free and fair elections. I express the hope that the forces of influence inside and outside Haiti will do everything possible to help, and nothing to hinder, Haiti's transition to electoral democracy.

Saint Kitts and Nevis applauds the attempts at rapprochement between North and South Korea. The world needs all the peace and conciliation it can find.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

We support the continuation of the dialogue between the two Korean Governments in the firm belief that it can lead to peace and reunification. My delegation reiterates its call for both countries on the Korean Peninsula to become States Members of the United Nations as a positive step to enhancing their dialogue towards reunification within the Organization's structured and sympathetic framework.

The international community is so preoccupied at this time that the concerns and aspirations of small island nations may not occupy a position of prominence on its agenda. However, I must endeavour to keep the development concerns of this unique group of nations before the members of the Assembly. We are vulnerable to hurricanes, as demonstrated by the devastation suffered by Saint Kitts and Nevis from the winds of Hurricane Hugo. In this regard, I take this opportunity to express the eternal gratitude of the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the assistance which was rendered by States Members and related institutions of this Organization.

We are also vulnerable to every fluctuation in economic parameters far removed from our shores, like the crisis in the Gulf. We are vulnerable to the adventurism of terrorists, like those who held the Prime Minister and Cabinet Members of Trinidad and Tobago hostage in July of this year. We in the Caribbean provided humanitarian assistance and we were prepared to supply military assistance if it was required. We are vulnerable to air, sea and land pollution originating outside of our shores.

The highest calling of the United Nations is to facilitate the peaceful development of all nations and to mobilize the community of nations to improve the quality of life of people everywhere. For this noble ideal to be realized, the world must have peace. Let us stand firm against aggression, exploitation and

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suppression, so that peace may be won and the world can direct its attention and its massive resources to the development of people everywhere. There is no higher ideal to which the United Nations can aspire.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. CAVALLO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, let me convey to you, Sir, my warm and heartfelt congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your experience and wisdom guarantee the success of our endeavours. I would also like to convey our delegation's appreciation to General Garba, who so efficiently guided our proceedings at the forty-fourth session.

We reiterate our welcome to the newly born Republic of Namibia as an independent State, thus putting an end to one of the most conflict-laden and unfair situations in recent history. We also welcome the Principality of Liechtenstein as a new State Member of our Organization, and we assure its delegation that we are willing to co-operate with it in the common purposes that guide our presence in the United Nations.

During the past year we have witnessed fundamental transformations in international relations. The far-reaching changes that have taken place in the countries of Eastern Europe and the commendable improvement in East-West relations have made it possible to join international public opinion in forecasting the end of the cold war.

(Mr. Cavallo, Argentina)

The reunification of Yemen has taken place. In a few days we shall witness the unification of Germany, which will put an end to the painful period of division of its people and will solve the most glaring of the remaining issues of the Second World War in Europe. We hope that in a not-too-distant future the presence of Korea will further strengthen the universality of our Organization.

We are also witnessing the realization of the hope for an end to racism and discrimination in South Africa, the achievement of progress towards solving very complex situations in South-East Asia and an almost complete return to democratic rule in Latin America. These are all signs of the strengthening of the United Nations, beginning with détente and the end of the policy of opposing blocs. They also imply a renewal in the practices of United Nations organs and a return to the spirit of San Francisco free of ideological content exemplified by an age of confrontation we have already left behind. Here, we can but pay a special tribute to Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, whose untiring efforts have contributed in large measure to those achievements.

History, however, is not linear. The enormous progress made by the international community during this past year in reconstituting the spirit of San Francisco has met a violent challenge. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq has darkened the light of this new era.

The Argentine people, together with the international community, is deeply concerned and afflicted by this episode born of aggression and of disregard for the most fundamental rules of international coexistence. My Government condemns Iraq's aggression and, in conformity with Security Council resolutions, demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and the restoration of the authority of the legitimate Government of that country.

Another source of concern is the situation in which the Kuwaiti people and the hundreds of thousands of foreign refugees in the area find themselves. My

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Government urges Iraq to apply the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols regarding the protection of civilian persons in time of war and to permit immediately all foreigners who wish to do so to leave Kuwait and Iraq.

However, we believe that these expressions are not enough, because we face a new fact: the first challenge to the order that has emerged since the ending of the cold war. This is a challenge that takes us back to a past we wish to leave behind - a past based on confrontation and the use of force which severely hampered the functioning of our Organization.

That is why we are opposed to those who propose aggression and terrorism, and in so doing we favour the implementation of the operative mechanisms envisaged in the Charter as the sole safeguard for the less powerful countries and as the guarantee of peace for the international community.

It is in that context that my Government has decided to send a force, which will join the international undertaking aimed at securing the implementation of United Nations resolutions imposing sanctions against Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait.

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This action on the part of my Government confirms its resolve fully to assume its international commitments. In the building of the post-cold-war world, all members of the international community, without exception, are responsible for keeping international peace and security, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

Our endorsement of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes applies to another issue, one whose importance for my country is well known. I refer to the question of the Malvinas Islands.

As the General Assembly is aware, my country has restored diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom, thus initiating a process of normalization that is already bearing fruit. This new situation is possible thanks to the political decision of President Menem to come to an agreement with the British Government on a formula that protects the sovereign rights of Argentina over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, which cannot be relinquished. Its implementation enables us to advance in the strengthening of our bilateral relations while we search for ways and means to solve existing differences. The Argentine Government believes that this new climate between the two countries must also facilitate, at the appropriate time, the resumption of negotiations on sovereignty repeatedly called for by the General Assembly.

Meanwhile, both countries need to work out special and creative arrangements which, while adequately taking into account the interests of the islanders, will permit co-operation between the Argentine continental territory and the Islands. This would allow us to solve the existing lack of contact, which is anachronistic and inconsistent with the current atmosphere of good will in the relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom.

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The Argentine Government once again expresses its political will to put an end to this situation of isolation and to comply fully with the General Assembly resolutions on the Malvinas Islands.

The solution reached in political situations of conflict provides clear evidence that our Organization is fulfilling its ideals of peace and co-operation. My Government is convinced that the United Nations can help to bring about a peaceful settlement of the international conflicts that still exist.

The new international situation will allow the Organization to play a relevant role in the conflicts in the Western Sahara and Cambodia. Special mention should be made of the positive efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council in preparing the peace plan for Cambodia.

However, we are concerned that, in spite of the countless efforts and the progress achieved towards the peaceful settlement of many regional conflicts, the international community is still in doubt because it has not found a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. My Government, which has joined in the efforts of the international community to find a peaceful and comprehensive solution on this question, considers that the United Nations should not fail to take advantage of the unique opportunity offered by the present international situation, so as to enable the Palestinian people to achieve the recognition and exercise of its legitimate rights through a just and negotiated solution.

Co-operation and dialogue must prevail over any other objective, so that all States of the region may be able to live together in peace and harmony. In addition, we believe that in order for Israel to realize that the United Nations is promoting a just and unbiased solution, it would be advisable to forgo the offending references based on analogies between zionism and racism that emerge in times of confrontation and contribute little to the search for a constructive dialogue.

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The process of democratic reform in Latin America will determine the role of that region in the new course of world events. The establishment of newly elected Governments in Chile and Nicaragua, and the negotiations between the Government of El Salvador and the rebel forces since the agreements arrived at in Geneva in April, confirm this trend towards democracy, tolerance and political pluralism. At the same time, we observe more and more often the far-reaching processes of economic reform and renewed initiatives for integration on the part of the Latin American countries and of America as a whole, which allow us to hope that the nations of this continent will move in the direction of development, modernization and institutional stability.

Argentina gives special relevance to the challenge implied in the commitment assumed with Brazil to structure a common market to be completed towards the end of 1994. We are striving to ensure that this initiative will involve other sister States of Latin America also.

In a world that is constantly shrinking as a result of technological progress, generating an international system that is increasingly interdependent and complex, there is a need for transparent foreign policy actions that will generate trust in relations between States. Those relations must adapt to the fundamental changes in the political and economic criteria that prevail in the world. Whereas at the political level we see that there is an irreversible tendency to reaffirm human rights and pluralism, as against dictatorship and authoritarianism which are irreparably on the decline, at the economic level we see the reopening of markets as against State interventionism and protectionism.

The domestic policy decisions adopted by the Government of my country since mid-1989 coincide with these profound international changes, pursuing as they do the strengthening of freedom and democracy, on the one hand, and the economic

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reform and the opening up of our economy on the other, all in order to fit politically and economically into the new international reality.

In this new context, at the international level there prevails a clear tendency to reform paralysing State structures to allow the demonopolization and deregulation of economic activities and to create a competitive, productive system as an indispensable basis for development.

Our Government joins in these trends with the firm resolve to become an integral part of the global economy, in order to put an end to marginality and the dead end of increasing indebtedness without development. This calls for an adjustment of our rules of the game in order to reverse stagnation, making the country a recipient of capital that may act as a dynamic force for our human and natural resources.

Two systems were born in the post-war period, systems to which my country has adhered and which should, in its opinion, be strengthened. I refer to the ones born in San Francisco and Bretton Woods, which reinforce each other, since peace and security are the basic requirements for stability and economic growth.

However, the confrontation between the two super-Powers prevented the two orders from fully working. Today, the generalized accession of the socialist economies to the main international financial institutions and the end of the cold war are opening up a new chapter in the future of international co-operation, making it possible to envision the configuration of one world, increasingly integrated and co-operative.

In this context, we look towards an international trading system, free of distortions and barriers, one that may allow all members of the international community to become part of the global economy, according to their potential and possibilities. In this connection, the practice of subsidizing the production and

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export of agricultural products - which is seriously affecting the efficient producer countries - must be avoided.

My country is taking part in the ongoing negotiations of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), in the belief that on them depends to a great extent the multilateral solution to the expanding current trade conflicts and the future of international economic co-operation. In the economic field also we are facing a conflict between the law of the stronger, with a return to the trade wars of the period between the wars, on the one hand, and, on the other, multilateral agreements that reinforce the Bretton Woods system.

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In the last few years, the increasing need for co-operation between countries and their interdependence in respect of problems that transcend national boundaries and demand broader and more co-ordinated responses - problems such as the environment, human rights and drugs - have become characteristic of the international system and offer a fertile context for international co-operation and the work of our Organization.

Environmental considerations make it necessary to identify models which can be sustained without depleting the resources that feed them. We are fully aware of the need to take, at the national level, every step that will ensure that future generations enjoy the resources we have received. We also know that in many cases national efforts will not be enough in themselves and we are trying to find, especially at the regional level, a way to implement concerted and effective conservation initiatives. Some serious problems, which have not, in general, been caused by the developing countries, are of a global nature, and we are committed to the common effort to halt deterioration and bring about environmental recovery.

The Conference on Environment and Development, whose preparatory work is under way, will be a favourable arena in which to demonstrate the new spirit of co-operation that is needed to solve shared problems.

Illicit trafficking in drugs can be effectively controlled only if all members of the international community act in a concerted fashion towards that end; in this respect, my country has endorsed the political declaration and global plan of action adopted during the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the question of narcotic drugs.

The individual and collective dimensions of human rights are complementary, and come together for the benefit of human beings in such a way that civil and political rights are as important as economic, social and cultural rights. We are convinced that the former are no more important than the latter - and indeed no

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less important - and that the exercise of some cannot serve as a pretext for denying the exercise of others.

The serious events that have taken place in recent weeks have created a historical emergency, and we must therefore co-operate vigorously to make a world which is safer in its search for peace. On this global scene, our Organization has a crucial role to play; we already possess the necessary structures for discussion, and all we have to do is adapt the existing executive mechanisms. We must rely on our collective imagination in order to find the fastest and safest way to that end.

We are witnessing renewed dynamism in the Security Council, which is undoubtedly the result of a new philosophy of co-operation on the part of the super-Powers in respect of regional and international conflicts. It is imperative for the work of the Council to be strengthened in an atmosphere free of mistrust and confrontation.

Once again, today the eyes of all the peoples of the world are on this forum, aware and hopeful that the Organization can contribute towards the creation of a safer and more just world. This century has seen played out countless wars and conflicts which made us doubt whether the principles of the Charter could be enforced and whether it was possible to leave future generations a world free of the scourge of war, a world in which the fundamental rights of man, the dignity and value of the human person and the equality of rights between men and women and nations great and small would be in force and observed. In the final years of this century, the international community cannot fail to take up the challenge of putting into practice the ideals of the founders of the Organization.

Mr. VELAYATI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (spoke in Persian; English text furnished by the delegation): I should like to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under your wise and able leadership the

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current session will take effective steps at this very sensitive juncture, when the role of the United Nations in resolving regional crises and confronting threats against international peace and security is being emphasized more than ever before.

Our world is undergoing a rapid transition. The tumultuous changes in this decade, including the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the resurgence of Islamic revivalism across the globe, characterized by reliance on God, religion, morality and people; the decline of Marxist thought, which had been based on the negation of these very, basic characteristics; rapid developments in the socialist bloc, concomitant with effective participation by the masses in the management of their own affairs; unification of the two Germanys, signifying the end of the age of the supremacy of super-Power interests over the aspirations of nations - these are all nothing if not clear evidence that we have arrived at the age of ever-increasing reawakening of nations. In this age, aggression, domination and exploitation - under the pretext of containing the rival Power - will be resisted by hitherto repressed nations, but also the application of double standards to such phenomena and situations will be shunned by international public opinion.

Now that it appears that the age of cold war and fierce super-Power rivalry has come to an end, if the transition in the international system fails to embody the principle of justice, and if the concentration of resources in certain specific parts of the world do not cater to the qualitative promotion of living standards and growth and development in the least developed and the developing countries, I venture to state that a real confrontation between the oppressed and their oppressors will be a foregone conclusion. This is far from being a threat: it is a realistic analysis of the objective conditions of human beings who are cognizant of the causes of their plight and their deprivation, and have come to realize that for the subjugated nations there exists no other choice but to overturn an imposed situation.

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Therefore, ensuring the rights of nations is of vital importance for the establishment of just and peaceful relations among States in the future international system. The evolution of the world order should create a milieu in which all nations can develop and realize their potentials for growth, development and scientific and cultural progress. Economic justice, development and relative prosperity, social equality, promotion of respect for the rule of law in international affairs, non-resort to aggression and coercion in the settlement of disputes and respect for the sovereignty of all States should, inter alia, provide the foundations for the new international order. In this context, the role of the United Nations in guiding international developments towards the realization of such common human ideals is indeed a sensitive and fundamental question.

The raison d être for our presence in this prestigious world forum is to respect the will of the international community as crystallized in the purposes and principles of the United Nations enshrined in its Charter. In the light of the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq and the current crisis in the Persian Gulf and the ensuing world-wide outrage, a glance at the realities and origins of the crisis and a comparison between Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and the aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran 10 years ago would indeed be in order.

Hours after the occupation of Kuwait the Security Council adopted a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter, demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Five resolutions, condemning the aggression, imposing comprehensive sanctions and calling for concerted international pressure, received the seal of approval of the Council in the span of two weeks; this makes a total of seven resolutions so far. All of a sudden, the major Powers in the Security Council, in particular the United States, rose to the defence of the Charter in an unprecedented manner, claiming that they would not

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allow any tampering with cardinal and universally recognized principles of international law, employing the means available to the international community in order to ensure the failure of the party which had chosen to solve its problems through resort to force and military occupation of another country, so that the aggressor would be denied any fruit of its aggression. A spectacular public of international solidarity to corner the aggressor was painted in front of the unbelieving eyes of the world public.

Let us now compare this pattern of behaviour with that of the same Powers in the Security Council and their regional allies vis-à-vis the Iraqi aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran 10 years ago. At that time, the first Security Council resolution was adopted six long days after the aggression, and it only called for "refraining from any further use of force", without even referring to withdrawal. For the next eight years, support in all its imaginable forms - political, diplomatic, military, logistical, intelligence and financial - was lavished on Iraq in order even to prevent the Iranian people from repelling aggression and regaining their legitimate rights.

It appears as though for those eight years such principles as the inadmissibility of resort to force and occupation and the duty to suppress acts of aggression did not exist in the Charter of the United Nations. The righteous positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and those that I, myself, pronounced every year from this very rostrum were all but ignored, owing to the supremacy of the self-serving logic of hegemonic Powers over the principles of the Charter and the unfortunate negligence of some Arab States in the Persian Gulf of their long-term interest. This approach was pursued not only during the eight years of sacred defence by the Muslim people of Iran, but even during the two-year-long talks to achieve the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987),

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during which not even a single word was uttered by the champions of international law in support of the mandatory requirements of their own resolution and of our legitimate rights, much less the realization of justice. Surprisingly, lack of progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) was instead utilized by the same quarters as a means to seek political concessions from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Lack of real commitment to principles and manipulation of the rules of international law have created a situation in which the positions and statements of the parties to the current crisis are in blatant contradiction with their practices and policies during the past decade. The party calling on the nations in the region to resist the imperialist policies of the United States and its regional collaborators fought, in concert with the same imperialist policies, against the Islamic Republic of Iran for eight long years. And the party now claiming to oppose aggression and uphold the principles of the Charter and the decisions of the Security Council is the very same State which, along with its allies and in total contravention of the Charter, dispatched its armada to the Persian Gulf, resorting to joint military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran, precisely in a bid to assist the aggression against Iran and to save the aggressor.

Against that background, the Islamic world will examine the realities as they are, notwithstanding the demagogic rhetoric, and cognizant of the fact that the origins of the current confrontation lie in a dispute over the expansion of gains, and not in a commitment to principles. Therefore, neither side can expect to command the support of Muslim public opinion unless it embarks on a practical and clear course of rectifying its past policies.

In view of the very dangerous and critical circumstances in the strategic Persian Gulf area and despite the tremendous damages incurred by the Iranian people

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as a result of the hostile policies of the major Powers and some regional States in the course of the past 10 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has followed the developments with consistency, concern and keen interest, and has reacted accordingly. From the very outset of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly and unambiguously condemned Iraqi aggression and demanded the immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

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Regrettably, the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait provided the pretext for foreign Powers, particularly the United States and other Western countries, to dispatch their forces on a massive scale to the Persian Gulf region. Recent statements by American officials signifying their intention - a long-term presence of United States forces in the area, and the creation of a new military and security arrangement in the region - are alarming, and certainly give rise to further instability and tension in the area. It would be a very great mistake for the United States to assume that Muslim people would be indifferent to, and silent in the face of, such a presence.

We have repeatedly declared, even from this very rostrum, that lasting peace and security in the volatile Persian Gulf region can be provided only by the countries of the region. The religious, cultural and economic bonds between the countries in the Persian Gulf provide the fundamental incentives for their solidarity, and give them the necessary capability to preserve regional security, free from the presence and intervention of foreign forces. It is regrettable that some countries in our region have not yet appreciated the reality that foreign forces seek to further their own interests rather than those of countries in the region. Enjoying one of the longest traditions of contribution to human civilization and global peace, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the major country of the region, considers its national security to be intertwined with the stability of the sensitive Persian Gulf area, and has proved to be a pillar of regional stability and security. In this context, relying on its faithful Muslim people, it has resisted any foreign domination, as such domination is the cause of instability in the area.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while, as a matter of principle, condemning the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq and rejecting any alteration in the region's

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geography, which would certainly lead to a state of permanent instability, considers the long-term presence of foreign military forces in the area to be detrimental to the interests and security of the countries in the region. It is the firm conviction of the Islamic Republic of Iran that faithful commitment to, and compliance with, the relevant Security Council resolutions by all countries - particularly Iraq - is the only path to the establishment of peace and tranquillity in our area. The Islamic Republic of Iran once again reaffirms its commitment to compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, in line with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

From the outset, we have made a very clear distinction between, on one hand, the process of peace and the resumption of good neighbourly relations with Iraq and, on the other hand, the current crisis in the Persian Gulf. On 14 August 1990 the President of Iraq, in a letter addressed to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Iraq to the 1975 Treaty concerning State Frontier and Neighbourly Relations between Iran and Iraq. Since then, in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987), Iraqi forces have withdrawn, in a military sense, from the occupied territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and a majority of the prisoners of war have been exchanged.

The visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the subsequent visit of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, undertaken for the implementation of relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), including the comprehensive exchange of prisoners of war, the adoption of decisions necessary for the reinstatement of frontier lines in accordance with the 1975 Treaty, and other political issues of mutual interest, such as settlement of outstanding issues and the re-opening of the embassies, signify the mutual desire of the two sides for

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the establishment of peace between the two Muslim nations, which enjoy historical and deep-rooted religious and cultural bonds.

I should like once again to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to his distinguished colleagues for their tireless efforts towards implementation of resolution 598 (1987). It is our earnest hope that settlement of the dispute between Iran and Iraq, in accordance with the Security Council resolution, will provide a precedent for termination of the occupation of Kuwait and resolution of the current Persian Gulf crisis on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions.

The ongoing Persian Gulf crisis, which has seriously jeopardized regional, as well as global, security and stability and has brought the military buildup in the region to the threshold of explosion, does indeed underline the necessity of intensifying international efforts in the field of disarmament. The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the most essential step for the realization of comprehensive and total disarmament lies in fundamental changes in the military doctrines of major nuclear Powers. These doctrines have, in the course of several decades, not only accelerated the arms race and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, but have also contributed to the flare-up of many international and regional conflicts and crises, thereby derailing the limited resources of the developing countries from socio-political development to military-hardware acquisitions.

So long as comprehensive disarmament has not materialized, the adoption of immediate measures, such as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, the strengthening of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or the threat of the use of such weapons, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various

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parts of the world - in particular, the Middle East - is indeed necessary for the preservation of international peace and security. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the country most victimized by the use of chemical weapons in recent times, attaches particular significance to the conclusion of a chemical-weapons convention and is of the view that the comprehensiveness and universality of such a convention require the adoption of certain precise and all-inclusive provisions. Moreover, we believe that it is imperative that measures be taken to guarantee the security of the countries facing the threat of the use of chemical weapons. Equally, the major Powers should refrain from insisting upon maintaining certain quantities of their chemical arsenals as security.

The Middle East problem persists, and the oppressed Palestinian people continue to suffer. The régime occupying Palestine, whose very foundation is aggression and expansionism, continues to intensify its cruel crimes, and, in a vicious campaign to eliminate the Islamic resistance, has embarked on a persistent policy of expulsion of Palestinian inhabitants and of forcible demographic change, as well as the murder and injury of large numbers of the oppressed Muslim people of Palestine.

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Nevertheless, the heroic intifadah of the Palestinian people, now in its third year, has amply proved that, despite the barbaric policies of the Zionist régime, this genuine popular movement for reassertion and regaining of the usurped rights of a revolutionary people continues to march forward. In the meantime the massive settlement of Jewish migrants in occupied Palestine has been a matter of deep concern. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while condemning this joint scheme of the Zionists and hegemonic Powers, believes that it is incumbent upon the international community to counter such illegal and inhuman practices.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, stressing the necessity of preserving the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and respect for the right to self-determination of the people of Lebanon in accordance with the will of the majority, reaffirms its full support for the resistance of the Lebanese and Islamic national forces against the conspiracies and aggression of the Zionist régime.

The Security Council's expeditious response to the recent act of aggression in the Persian Gulf has fostered the optimism that the Council is approaching, although belatedly, the realization that for the maintenance of international peace and security adoption of a resolute stance and effective practical measures to counter aggression is a logical imperative. Hence the Council is duty-bound to shoulder its constitutional obligations vis-à-vis persistent Zionist aggression against Islamic lands and adopt effective concrete measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The question of Afghanistan, notwithstanding advances and setbacks in the course of last year, still remains unresolved. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a neighbour of Afghanistan, and in light of common ties of religion, culture and history, cannot remain indifferent to the destiny of its neighbouring country and its Muslim people. While reaffirming our support for the struggle of the Muslim

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Afghan people, we stress the necessity for establishing an independent, Islamic and non-aligned government in Afghanistan enjoying good relations with its neighbours, which can only be attained through the unity of all Afghan Muslim people and respect for the wish of the majority expressed in a free election.

We declare our readiness to play an active and serious role in assisting the Afghan people to hold free elections in the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination - a role emanating from the existing strong moral bonds between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Afghan people and the Mujahidin. The mechanism for free elections under the supervision of the United Nations, which was proved effective in turbulent areas such as Namibia, can be utilized with the co-operation of neighbouring countries to bring the crisis in Afghanistan to an end. We hope that with the resolution of the Afghan problem and the emergence of a propitious situation, Afghan refugees can voluntarily and honourably return to their homeland.

On the question of Kashmir, the Islamic Republic of Iran expresses deep concern over the violent trend of last year. It is to be hoped that through adoption of appropriate measures, and taking into account the demands of the Muslim people of Kashmir, fundamental steps for the peaceful settlement of this question will be taken.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has, since the adoption of the historic Declaration of the special session of the General Assembly on apartheid, followed developments in South Africa with interest and concern. The release of Nelson Mandela represents the beginning of a process which can be completed only by the total dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and the formation of a non-racial government based on the free will of the people of that country.

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The Islamic Republic of Iran, inspired by the principle of the dignity and exalted worth of the human person, has always emphasized the civil and political,as well as economic, social and cultural rights and responsibilities of human beings and has attached prominence to the participation of all people in determining their destiny in political, economic, cultural and social fields. For more than a decade, the Islamic Republic of Iran participated actively in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the drafting of the Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and, last December, hosted the concluding meeting of experts in Tehran to finalize that document. While in this context we continue to co-operate with the human rights organs of the United Nations, and support relevant United Nations activities geared to the promotion and betterment of the human situation, we are of the view that politically motivated or selective approaches in such organs would tarnish the very credibility and undermine the effectiveness of the Organization in this sensitive field.

Creation of a healthy environment and a social milieu conducive to the preservation of human dignity and the growth of the personality of the human being calls for a concerted campaign at the global level against poverty, discrimination, moral decadence and crime. Drug addiction and trafficking is a social ill of global dimension which not only destroys the body and the soul of millions of people but also lies at the root of rampant violence threatening the fabric of many societies. The Islamic Republic of Iran, because of its sensitive geographic position, has had to grapple with the transit of narcotics and its pernicious effects on our society. We have adopted a comprehensive plan to combat this menace. Yet, experience has shown that success in eradicating the drug problem requires no less than a concerted and decisive international response, co-operation and programme of action.

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The eighteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and, in particular, revitalization of growth and development in the developing countries, was a welcome turning-point in our collective efforts to overcome economic crises in developing countries and to establish an equitable and balanced system equally benefiting the developed and the developing. In this context, the session's final declaration provides an appropriate framework for the resumption of the North-South dialogue. It took two long years of tireless efforts to agree on holding the session and to draft the text of its final declaration. This process, in order to come to fruition, requires not only the common will and political commitment of all countries but also the formulation of practical mechanisms and concrete steps, among which is the inclusion of an item under the same title in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

Today we are gathered here in this Assembly at a time when the importance of the role of the United Nations to attain international peace and security, counter aggression and promote friendly relations among all nations cannot be over-emphasized. International public opinion rightly expects this session of the General Assembly to be guided, without ulterior political motives, by the letter and spirit of the cardinal principles of the United Nations in confronting international conflicts, crises and challenges. The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to play its part in the realization of such lofty objectives.

Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to offer you the felicitations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your unanimous election is a well-deserved recognition of your many accomplishments in the service of your Government and of the international community. I am confident that under your stewardship, we will make substantive progress in our work.

I should like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Major-General Joseph Garba, for the exemplary manner in which he guided our deliberations during a very busy year - chairing the forty-fourth session; the sixteenth special session, on apartheid; the seventeenth special session, on illicit narcotic drugs; and the eighteenth special session, devoted to international economic co-operation. His decisive and enlightened leadership has gained him the admiration of the entire Assembly.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Indonesia, I extend a warm welcome to Liechtenstein upon its accession to membership of the United Nations. My delegation looks forward to close co-operation between our two countries.

We live at a time of extraordinary flux, a time of great promise as well as grave challenge, a time of opportunity amidst pervasive uncertainty - in short, a time of profound contrasts and contradictions. On the bright side of the spectrum, rapid and fundamental change continues to transform the global political and economic landscape, ushering in a refreshingly new phase in international relations. The trend towards conciliation and concordance among nations, especially among the major Powers, gathered further momentum during the past year. We are heartened by the new spirit of co-operation among the permanent members of

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the Security Council in concerting their endeavours towards the peaceful resolution of conflict situations.*

On the continent of Europe the political, the economic and even the physical barriers are coming down and the East-West divide is progressively losing its ideological connotation. The imminent unification of the two German States signifies both the symbolic and the actual end of an era in European history. In Africa we have welcomed with deep satisfaction Namibia's accession to independence and have noted the salutary effect this landmark event has had on developments in South Africa, where the Pretoria régime appears to be moving with greater seriousness to meet the legitimate aspirations of the majority of its people. Encouraging progress is also being made in resolving the question of Western Sahara. In Central America, the processes of national and regional reconciliation have moved forward opening the way towards greater harmony and common progress in that strife-torn region. In Asia the past year also witnessed yet another instance of erstwhile divided States drawing together when the two Yemens decided to merge into the new Republic of Yemen. My delegation congratulates the Government and the people of fraternal Yemen on their historic union. Indonesia has equally welcomed the initiation of high-level talks between the two Koreas at Prime Ministerial level, in the hope that it may foster an atmosphere conducive to the realization of their shared aspirations for peaceful reunification. In South-East Asia there is renewed hope that, with the recent breakthroughs in the ongoing negotiating process, a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict may now be within our grasp.

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* Mr. Asamoah (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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On the global plane the easing of East-West tensions and of ideological contention and competition has opened up new possibilities for substantial progress in disarmament and arms reductions. At the same time, some seminal trends are making their impact felt in the economic sphere, offering enhanced opportunities as well as challenges to our quest for an international economic order of greater equity and generalized prosperity.

While these developments indeed bolster our hopes for the attainment of a more peaceful, secure, just and tolerant world, we cannot but be acutely aware also of the darker side of the picture. Despite the palpable improvements in the global political climate, despite the emergence of new and more enlightened perspectives on the solution of old and new problems, the international scene today is still beset by unresolved tensions and conflicts, by rampant violence and widespread instability. Deeply rooted inequities and imbalances continue to afflict inter-State relations, especially between developed and developing countries, where North-South polarization is becoming accentuated as the major issue of our time. The politics of power, political domination and economic coercion still feature all too prominently in present-day international relations, and the remaining vestiges of colonialism and institutionalized racism have yet to be erased from our vision of universal emancipation.

Against this backdrop it is deeply disturbing to note that States continue to resort to armed force and military intervention in the settlement of disputes, thus gravely threatening regional peace and global security and undermining all impulses and efforts to shape a world of greater harmony and mutual tolerance.

It is in this context that Indonesia has viewed with growing alarm and deep distress the recent events in the Gulf region. As a United Nations Member committed to uphold the sanctity of the Charter and as a country which unswervingly adheres to the 10 principles of Bandung and those of the Non-Aligned Movement,

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Indonesia has always firmly opposed foreign intervention, aggression and the use or threat of use of force in inter-State relations. Hence, Iraq's invasion and declared annexation of Kuwait cannot be condoned, and my Government fully supports and abides by all the Security Council resolutions adopted in that respect.

It is particularly saddening to us that the present conflict involves two fellow members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), with which Indonesia has long maintained close, brotherly relations. It is, moreover, profoundly regrettable that, as a result of these developments, efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the wider problems of the region caused by Israel's aggression and continued illegal occupation of Arab lands and persistent denial of the inalienable national and human rights of the Palestinian people appear to have been eclipsed.

We therefore concur with the Secretary-General that, once we succeed in putting the present crisis on the road to resolution, the longer-term, underlying problems of the region must be addressed. Towards this end, solutions cannot and should not be sought through military means or by unilateral action. Only a political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations or within the framework of Arab mediation, can avoid further aggravation and enlargement of the present conflict. Meanwhile, Indonesia calls upon all countries involved to exercise self-restraint and to refrain from actions that would only exacerbate a situation already close to boiling point.

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Other focal points of tension and conflict persist in many parts of the globe, notably on the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Although they are now being addressed with greater vigour and more receptivity towards dialogue and negotiation, the pace of progress in their comprehensive resolution unfortunately remains excruciatingly slow.

Armed strife in Afghanistan continues, with no clear prospect of a political settlement yet in sight. Likewise, on the question of Cyprus it is regrettable that no advance could be made towards an overall agreement despite the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General. In the context of Iran-Iraq relations, welcome progress has recently been made in the implementation of some key aspects of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), involving troop withdrawals and the repatriation of prisoners of war. We fervently hope that all the other elements of the resolution can now be fulfilled, thus leading to a just and durable peace.

Namibia's accession to independence represents not only the culmination of the heroic struggle of the Namibian people against colonial domination and racist oppression but also a clear vindication of the role of the United Nations as the unique multilateral forum to bring freedom and justice to oppressed people everywhere. But the total liberation of Africa will remain unfulfilled until the universally condemned system of apartheid in South Africa has been dismantled and replaced by a non-racial democratic government based on majority rule.

Indonesia welcomed the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and other political parties and organizations and we rejoiced at the release of Nelson Mandela. We note, however, that the basic structures of the apartheid system still remain in place. We therefore shall continue to demand that the Pretoria régime take the more fundamental steps of revoking the bulk of its repressive security legislation,

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freeing all political prisoners and engaging in a genuine negotiating process with the authentic leaders of the South African people. Meanwhile, sanctions must be maintained until the process of fundamental transformation - not mere cosmetic reform - has become irreversible.

Indonesia is gravely concerned that at a time when rapprochement and conciliation between erstwhile adversaries prevail in many regions of the world, the Middle East remains the vortex of violence and explosive tensions. Efforts at resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the Palestinian people's struggle for justice and freedom at its core, continue to stagnate. The peace process remains blocked by Israel's intransigent refusal to reciprocate the courageous peace initiatives by the Palestinian leadership and to adopt a rational negotiating position capable of advancing that process. On the contrary, it has persisted in its policies and practices of brutal repression against the Palestinian people and in its universally censured settlement schemes in the occupied territories. The situation has been further aggravated by Israel's most recent attempts at forcefully changing the demographic equation by allowing the influx of Soviet Jewish immigrants to settle in the West Bank and Gaza in blatant violation of international law. If not stopped, this unacceptable development will have far-reaching and disastrous effects on the problem as well as on the peace process itself.

In these circumstances and with the heightened tensions engendered by the present crisis in the Gulf, it is now more urgent than ever to press for an equitably conceived and comprehensively negotiated political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its complexity and dimensions. The International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations remains, in Indonesia's view, the most effective framework for negotiations on all the essential elements

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of a just solution. The alternative can only be mounting frustration and despair and an inexorable drift towards further violence.

In South-East Asia, the situation in Cambodia remains a major focus of concern to Indonesia and to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Over the past year, continuing efforts have been expended in the long and arduous search for a just, comprehensive and durable settlement of the conflict. A number of meetings have taken place and valuable contributions have been made by many sides, which have all combined steadily to push the peace process forward. Particularly noteworthy in this regard has been the agreement reached by the five permanent members of the Security Council at their recent meeting in New York on a framework and on key elements of a comprehensive political settlement based on an enhanced role of the United Nations. Prior to this, some basic understandings were also reached among the Cambodian parties and regional countries in meetings held in Jakarta, Bangkok, Tokyo and elsewhere.

Most recently, a significant breakthrough was achieved at a meeting in Jakarta earlier this month, convened by France and Indonesia as co-Chairmen of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia (PICC) and attended by the four Cambodian parties as well as by the representative of the United Nations Secretary-General. At this meeting the Cambodian parties agreed to accept the framework document formulated by the five permanent members of the Security Council in its entirety as the basis for settling the Cambodian conflict, and they committed themselves in co-operation with all the other participants of the PICC to elaborate this framework into a comprehensive political settlement through the processes of the PICC. They also agreed to form a Supreme National Council as the unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the independence, sovereignty and unity of Cambodia would be embodied. The Supreme

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National Council will henceforth represent Cambodia externally and occupy the seat of Cambodia at the United Nations and all its specialized agencies and in other international institutions and international conferences.

The achievement of those two agreements, taken together, indeed represents a major step forward, imparting a decisive impetus to the negotiating process. With the ground thus prepared for the early reconvening of the Paris Conference, it is our fervent hope that all parties to the conflict and other concerned countries will now marshal the required political determination to pursue the process and to elaborate and conclude a comprehensive political settlement. The path ahead may still be rocky, but I am confident that we have now come to the final stretch on the road to a just and enduring peace in Cambodia and an end to the immense suffering of its people.

The cold war has ended. But as we assess its implications let us not entertain the rather simplistic notion that it has resulted in the victory of one side and the defeat of the other. I would like to believe that rationality and a growing awareness of the need for common security have won over the military and political doctrines which for so long have threatened to lead the world to the brink of collective self-destruction.

The current international scene impresses on us the sobering reality of how little progress has been made in disarmament and how marginally we have moved in stemming the arms race. A more effective strategy is therefore needed to reverse the arms race and to accelerate the process of arms reduction and disarmament, especially in the nuclear field. In the context of START, the prospects for concrete agreements are within reach and we urge their rapid adoption. Further negotiations should seek even deeper reductions in nuclear forces and limitations on qualitative improvements. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty

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should continue to be accorded high priority and, as such, should be clearly reflected in the forthcoming amendment conference on the partial test-ban Treaty. It is a source of great disappointment for Indonesia that the recently held Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty did not succeed in articulating a consensus concerning the cessation of the nuclear arms race. The failure to achieve a final declaration is all the more regrettable against the background of the present improved global situation.

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It is our fervent hope that the attitudes demonstrated by the major nuclear Powers during the Review Conference will not be reintroduced at the forthcoming conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty, as this would only serve to confirm the untenable position that the complete cessation of nuclear testing can only be negotiated bilaterally between the two super-Powers.

As regards regional disarmament, my delegation believes that efforts to expedite the realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia, and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia as its integral component, should become increasingly relevant. Purposeful progress in this regard would constitute a concrete contribution by the regional States to the establishment of greater peace and stability in their part of the world.

Rapid change and transition, the distinctive hallmarks of the global political situation, are of equal pertinence to the economic and the social sphere. Lasting peace cannot be sustained in isolation from socio-economic progress. Both are inextricably linked. As is increasingly being recognized, peace needs to be securely anchored in the solid bedrock of economic development and social justice world-wide.

The decade of the 1990s has ushered in a remarkable and promising new era. With the end of the cold war and the amelioration in East-West relations, vast new opportunities for economic development have opened up. At the same time, the world economy and international economic relations are moving towards ever greater interdependence and integration. The globalization of economic activities, the emergence of new and powerful economic centres, and major shifts in comparative advantage, have drastically altered the patterns of production, consumption and trade. In addition, innovations in science and technology, and the revolution in communications, have also resulted in enlarged possibilities for the common progress of nations and people .

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Yet, it is also true that given the asymmetries in present-day international economic relations, some of these trends could present major challenges and constraints to the developing countries. The past year has witnessed the dramatic transformation of the Eastern European centrally planned economies, leading to their progressive integration into the world economic system. Indonesia welcomes this development, for its own sake and for the prospects it offers of new opportunities, such as expanded markets for exports from developing countries. Nevertheless, there is also genuine and justified concern that financial, trade and investment flows of considerable magnitude from the developed North might now be rechannelled to Eastern Europe. In addition, we are carefully assessing the possible impact of the formation of powerful economic groupings among developed countries, as exemplified by the prospective single European market and the United States-Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Certainly, such regional economic integration could be a major stimulus to the global economy, provided however that it remains outward-looking and does not result in additional external barriers.

In the light of these circumstances, we are gratified with the consensus outcome of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation. Its Declaration provides the international community with a coherent blueprint for overcoming the crippling legacies of the past and meeting the challenges of the 1990s. At the same time, we are fully aware that if the provisions of the Declaration are not translated into concrete measures, the acclaimed spirit, aspirations and hopes generated at the special session may prove illusory. What is needed is to build upon this important first step and to ensure the success of our collective endeavours in those undertakings, as already set out on the international agenda.

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Of great importance on this agenda is the International Development Strategy for the 1990s. The proposed strategy, as discussed at the recently concluded fourth session of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Committee, is an ambitious yet realistic undertaking. It should promote the achievement of its principal aim, namely, that of accelerating the development of the developing countries. In this connection, we certainly appreciate the emphasis being placed on new issues of common concern, including environmental protection, human development and the alleviation of poverty. At the same time, it is important to make sure that our preoccupation with these concerns does not obscure the urgent need to address and resolve the perennial problems confronting the developing countries, especially the interrelated issues of money, finance, debt, trade and commodities.

The Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, now in its final and critical stage, is another event of the utmost importance on the international agenda. Let us be clear that the ultimate objective of the Round is to strengthen the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and its rules, so as to ensure an open and fair international trading system. It should not therefore be construed as legitimizing the vested interests of the strong. In this context, it is vital that these negotiations should lead to an equitable and balanced outcome, taking fully into account the specific concerns and needs of the developing countries. This should in essence mean creating an international trading environment that will permit the developing countries effectively to pursue their development process, while benefiting from their comparative advantage in the production, processing and export of their commodities and manufactures.

Beyond the Uruguay Round, the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII) in 1991 should provide us with an excellent opportunity

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to address international co-operation in trade and development, such as the revitalization of international commodity co-operation and other trade related development issues.

As the Secretary-General mentioned in his report on the work of the Organization, the foremost problem in the context of renewing the process of growth and development requiring an adequate international response is that of external indebtedness. In this regard, we are encouraged by the appointment of Mr. Bettino Craxi as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on debt. We sincerely hope that his findings and recommendations will contribute to our collective search for more innovative, comprehensive and effective responses to the external debt problems of all categories of debtor developing nations.

As a country acutely conscious of the vulnerability of the world's ecosystem and of the resultant threats to future development that its destruction may cause, Indonesia attaches particular importance to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. The world's blemished environment obviously calls out for redress. The responsibility for this undertaking should be equitably shared amongst all nations, taking fully into account the existing disparities between developed and developing countries. More specifically, the developing countries should not be penalized for the development excesses of the industrialized countries. Rather, the linkages between environmental concerns and the legitimate development needs of developing countries should be fully recognized. It is our sincere hope that the preparatory process for the Conference recently launched in Nairobi will succeed in forging consensus on an effective programme of action to address this major concern of humanity.

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The importance increasingly attached by the international community to human development is further reinforced by the Human Development Report 1990 recently released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This report reflects the growing recognition of the human factor as central to the success of development policies and the alleviation of mass poverty. In addition, it spells out strategies for human development as measured by the human development index. We welcome this additional dimension as a means for complementing, rather than replacing, the traditional parameters of development. At the regional level, the Jakarta Plan of Action, adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) more than two years ago, was specifically designed to enhance the human dimension of development. Now already in its operational phase, the Plan of Action is demonstrating its great significance to the development processes in the region.

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The common aspiration of mankind to decent living conditions, adequate shelter, respect for fundamental human rights and the health and well-being of our children is moving to the forefront of international consciousness and is reshaping the international agenda. The forthcoming World Summit for Children is a manifestation of this shift in priorities and will be a significant occasion for focusing the attention of the international community on the plight of its most vulnerable members. Although only a beginning, the goals of the Summit with respect to child survival, protection and development must be given full force. It is surely within our collective capacity to do so.

In that connection, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by the requisite number of Member States and has entered into force. Indonesia, having signed the Convention earlier this year, has now completed the ratification process and has deposited the instruments of ratification with the United Nations. Having assumed the legal as well as the moral obligations of the Convention, we shall work diligently to fulfil this commitment and shall continue to enhance and protect the lives of children.

In other areas as well our common resolve must continue to be strengthened. Illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and the dilemma of drug abuse continue to take a prominent place on our agenda. The seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, on international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, testified to that. The Political Declaration and the Global Programme of Action adopted at that session strengthened the inventory at our disposal to counter this threat to society and again signaled our collective commitment to effective action and unity of purpose. Significantly, the need to address issues of both supply and demand has been reconfirmed, along with the underlying social causes that

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generate the use of illicit narcotics. Indonesia remains fully committed to the international campaign against illicit trafficking and drug abuse, and pledges its best efforts to contribute to its success.

The assault on society by those who traffic in and abuse illicit narcotics must be turned back. The death of 25,000 young people each day from preventable causes can no longer be tolerated. Yet these issues cannot be divorced from the questions of overall development. Indeed, the new international agenda must be shaped within the broad context of socio-economic development, guided by a moral conscience. The fundamental human rights of all people and the equal treatment of women and their inclusion as equal partners in the development process must be ensured. Poverty and despair must be overcome. Education must be enhanced. In sum, the overall quality of life for all people, and particularly for our children, must be improved so that we may build a better future for all mankind.

As we enter the last decade of the century we are again being presented with a unique opportunity to construct a radically new, more peaceful, just and prosperous global order. This opportunity should not be missed. Yet if the pursuit of that objective is to achieve tangible reality, a renewal of confidence in multilateralism and a recognition of the irreplaceable value and role of the United Nations are imperative.

In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General advanced a number of proposals to strengthen further the functioning of the United Nations. We believe that in view of the Organization's steadily expanding role in peace-keeping and peace-making, the search for ways and means to ensure broader and more stable support for such activities has indeed become essential. The need is now also being felt for periodic meetings of the Security Council at a high political level to survey world political developments and to identify potential

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conflict and crisis situations, thereby enhancing the Council's capacity for preventive diplomacy. Such meetings should be supported by an improvement in the Secretary-General's capacity for timely and unbiased information gathering. At the same time, the central functions of the Economic and Social Council in policy guidance and monitoring and co-ordinating system-wide action in the economic, social and humanitarian fields should be equally strengthened.

But we should always bear in mind that all efforts to strengthen the role, improve the functioning and increase the efficiency and efficacy of the United Nations will remain inadequate unless they are matched by the consistent support, including the financial support, of all Member States. I wish also to underscore the Secretary-General's observation that the Organization will be in danger of being bypassed and sidelined if Member States, especially the major Powers, choose to act outside the ambit of the purposes and principles of the Charter. We fully agree with him that

> "It is the willing endorsement of the decisions of the Security Council by the international community that can best counter any impression ... of world affairs being run by a directorate". (A/45/1, p. 13)

The world is at a crossroads. The forces of change are relentlessly pushing it into uncharted waters. While opportunities abound, so too do uncertainties and dangers. To meet these unprecedented challenges effectively, multilateral co-operation and genuine interdependence are critically important. Nor is it a viable alternative to advance the interests of any State or region at the expense of others. It is only through shared responsibility and a shared commitment to global co-operation and solidarity that we can hope to manage the massive changes that are transforming the shape and substance of international relations for the decades ahead.

Mr. NIEHAUS QUESADA (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to convey to Mr. Guido de Marco the sincere congratulations of the Government and the people of Costa Rica on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. For Costa Rica - a country which is small like Malta and democratic like Malta - it is deeply satisfying to see a son of the land of Mizzi guiding the work of the Assembly at its forty-fifth session. We are sure his election to the presidency will constitute a decisive contribution to the success of the Assembly's work.

The breadth of experience of the Secretary-General, his total commitment to the cause of peace and his tireless dedication to his work have exalted the office of Secretary-General and have earned the gratitude of the entire world. Under the leadership of Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the United Nations has resumed its place in the search for harmony. It has renewed its role as the focal point of international relations and the repository of collective efforts towards peace and co-operation between nations. It is an honour for Costa Rica to join the groundswell of international public opinion in conveying its respectful tribute and sincere thanks to a man who has given the Organization its brightest days.

Costa Rica takes great pleasure in welcoming the admission of Namibia as a new Member of the United Nations. Despite the geographic distance, my country for many years supported the legitimate right of the Namibian people to self-determination. In 1983 it was our privilege to act as host to the first regional seminar organized by the United Nations on the question of Namibia. We are sincerely happy that the Namibian independence process has come to a peaceful and eminently democratic conclusion, and that today the representative of that people has joined us in this forum.

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My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to express its profound pleasure at the admission of a new Member State, the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations. Costa Rica considers that Liechtenstein's democratic system and dedication to peace and development co-operation are firm guarantees that Liechtenstein will make a valuable contribution to the activities of this world Organization.

Costa Rica believes that in order to achieve its goals the United Nations should include all sovereign States. The principle of universality, in keeping with the Organization's practice, implies that all the world's peoples have the right to be represented here. In this respect, my country wishes to express yet again its conviction that an affirmative response should be given to the aspiration of the Republic of Korea to join the United Nations and that this response should not be conditional on the vicissitudes of inter-Korean affairs, but should rather be viewed in the light of the Charter alone. We have observed with great pleasure the exemplary efforts that have resulted in unification of the Yemen seat, and which will shortly have an analogous result in the case of German representation. While the much-desired reunification of Korea has not taken place, Costa Rica believes that the legitimate desire of the Republic of Korea to join in the efforts of this Organization cannot be ignored.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to offer its cordial congratulations to the many Member States which, in the year which has elapsed since the last session of the General Assembly, have seen the seeds of democracy take root. There is no doubt that this phenomenon, which is daily more widespread, increases the moral authority of this Organization and the respect which its goals and principles should inspire in all of us.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

It is certainly true that within a very short period of time the world has been transformed. International law has come to be seen as the right instrument for solving disputes. A wind of optimism has blown through the most disparate places on the planet. With a speed disconcerting even to the most astute observers, conflicts have dissipated, dialogue has flourished and confrontation has given way to co-operation. For the first time in its long history, the world has started to become a real community of united nations. None the less, this new tack mankind has taken towards common sense is at this very moment facing a serious, unforeseeable and unjustifiable obstacle. The Persian Gulf crisis is endangering world peace and undermining the fundamental values of this Organization. With flagrant disregard for the most elementary principles of the rights of peoples, a State Member of the United Nations has been invaded by another. Its authorities have been deposed, and to cap it all it has been unceremoniously annexed. The Iraqi aggression against Kuwait has earned universal condemnation, and the United Nations has faithfully lived up to its commitment by demanding that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait be respected and by implementing specific measures to ensure that this occurs. Unhappily, the Government of Iraq has to date refused to heed the voice of the international community, and even the resolutions of the Security Council; world peace hangs by a thread while billion-dollar losses are occurring in the economies of the various countries of the world, the lives of innocent people are in peril and all nations, particularly under-developed countries, are beginning to feel the tragic effects of a new energy crisis.

Costa Rica, which has entrusted its security to international law, reiterates its strong condemnation of the aggression perpetrated against Kuwait and firmly supports the decisions taken by the United Nations aimed at preserving peace and

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guaranteeing the effectiveness of the principles of the Charter. We cannot in exchange for peace permit the illegal to be tolerated as if it were legal. However, we must also, through strict compliance with Security Council resolutions, prevent this century of countless victims from concluding with a third blood-bath, and instead leave the new millennium a legacy of harmony and fraternity.

There can be no doubt that the Central American process should form a part of this trend towards peace which is now prevalent in the world, and which it is now more urgent than ever to pursue, preserve and strengthen. The Central American crisis, which for more than a decade was the subject of innumerable press headlines and the reason for countless diplomatic initiatives, took its final course towards resolution with the implementation of the Esquipulas process, the last link in a long chain of efforts which began in 1982 and culminated in 1987, thanks to the Costa Rican initiative and with the consensus of the other Central American Governments. Today, all the countries in the region have democratically elected Governments, and the state of hostilities which afflicted Nicaragua has been ended. It is true that the internal conflict in El Salvador continues, but with the active support of the United Nations a process of dialogue is taking place which we trust will culminate in a solid peace for El Salvador and the reconciliation of all its people within a framework of liberty and democracy. Costa Rica also believes that as long as those negotiations continue, it is vitally important that there should be unilateral cease-fire declarations, both by the Government of El Salvador and by the FMLN, accompanied by immediate implementation of the agreement on human rights recently signed by the parties, in San José, Costa Rica, and of the reforms in electoral law agreed by the political parties of El Salvador and the FMLN. This would be evidence of a sincere interest in reaching

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a definitive solution and would put a stop to the tragedy the Salvadorian people are experiencing.

The Government of Costa Rica trusts also that on 7 November the Security Council will renew the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) so that it can continue its work in Central America and thus ensure proper verification of the undertakings not to allow the use of countries' territory for aggression against other States and to end assistance to the irregular forces.

After many years of hostilities, unrest and mistrust, the five countries of Central America are today experiencing a fruitful experiment in understanding and co-operation. None the less, the isthmus is emerging from the political crisis in deplorable economic and social conditions. The growth indices are feeble, there is a high trade deficit and standards of nutrition, health and education are worrying. Naturally, all these factors make the progress achieved in democratization and respect for human rights extremely fragile. We have worked hard to enable Central America to live in peace and freedom, but this effort will bear no fruit if it is not accompanied by prospects of development and social justice. In this respect, Costa Rica considers that support from the international community for the Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America should have high priority. We are extremely concerned lest diminishing tensions in Central America should entail - as has already happened in some aspects - a lack of interest in our problems and a reduction in co-operation for development in the area. Without international solidarity, the Central American nations will be unable to recover even to the levels of development they had before the crisis. Without development, the democratic will and the desire for a lasting peace of Central Americans are at risk.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

As is the case in Central America, tensions in other parts of the world have eased, and there are now only vestiges of what only a short time ago used to be called the East-West confrontation. Perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union and the wave of freedom which has swept away authoritarianism in Eastern Europe have brought about a genuine and complex transformation in international relations. The balance of terror has been displaced by a marked desire for concertation. The super-Powers have initiated effective policies of joint action, which are particularly important in terms of guaranteeing international peace and security. However, even if East-West tensions already seem destined to become mere history, North-South differences, in contrast, remain and are becoming more acute. The technological gulf is becoming an abyss, and there have been no major changes in the international economic order consequent on the changes in the international political scene. Furthermore, in the North-South forums for dialogue, there has been no radical change, no substantive change in attitude in favour of the underdeveloped world.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

There is no doubt that political changes have been highly positive, but what concrete value can the third world attribute to the new dimensions of the international horizon? What effective relevance can the flourishing of democracy and freedom have for the impoverished societies in the underdeveloped nations if their prospects for development do not improve? As His Holiness Pope John Paul II pointed out during his recent trip, Africa, the cradle of mankind, is suffering mercilessly from the tragedy of poverty and hunger. For its part Latin America, the emporium of foreign wealth, is seeing its reborn democracies immersed in discouragement while they are savagely lashed by terrorism and drug trafficking. The prices of its products are falling, its capital is being drained and its natural resources are being sadly destroyed.

Costa Rica does not argue that the solution to the critical social and economic conditions prevailing in the third world should be the exclusive responsibility of the developed nations. We know that in order to overcome poverty we must work with discipline. We know that there are no magic formulas for achieving development. We know that foreign aid will always be inadequate if it is not complemented by a rational and productive distribution of its components and a huge dose of effort and responsibility at the very core of our nations. However, we also consider that at the same time a different attitude should prevail in the developed world, a true willingness to improve the terms of trade, to contribute towards raising the levels of understanding in the economic and financial sphere. Costa Rica believes that the initiative of the Americas recently formulated by the President of the United States of America is directed to that end and represents a true effort to achieve co-operation in North-South relations. The situation in the third world will not substantially improve without progress in the solution of the problem of foreign debt, which should also be dealt with in unison. My country

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

does not seek to have its debts cancelled, nor do we believe that debt is the sole cause of our difficulties. We do, however, indeed believe that, taking into consideration the ability of debtors, it is time that, together, broad and specific answers be found to this problem, the effects of which severely handicap the possibility of improving the quality of life in underdeveloped countries.

Costa Rica further considers it fundamental that in numerous aspects the implementation of measures proposed by international financial institutions for dealing with the problems faced by third world countries in meeting their obligations carries with it a very high social price tag. Little progress can be made with such policies if the only thing to emerge from them are the elements of new crises, more poverty, more unemployment, less production, less education, less health and less housing. My country fervently urges the Governments of the developed countries whose voices are decisive in international financial organizations to bring their influence to bear on this problem and to bring about a change in attitude within those organizations. The international financial community can no longer ignore the aspect of the social cost if it truly wants readjustment policies to be successful. Technical criteria cannot qualify as such if they fail to take into account the social and human factors involved. Similarly, the policy of co-operation with the third world implemented by the majority of the developed countries would be meaningless if those same nations were at the same time to encourage international financial organizations to adopt an indifferent stance vis-à-vis the social costs to the third world of implementing the proposals emanating from such institutions. We emphasize that we are not seeking to elude our responsibilities but, rather, to find, together, the formula least detrimental to all of us.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

The same approach of joint responsibility should be taken with regard to the challenge of drug trafficking. For those who have personally suffered under that appalling scourge, the priority must not be to seek out the guilty but, rather, to find solutions, and we must find those solutions together, for we are all current or potential victims of the scourge. The tragedy that today afflicts the brave people of Colombia, a heroic defender of democracy that drug traffickers are trying to undermine, will tomorrow become the tragedy of the people of Costa Rica or, indeed, of any of the nations represented here, unless effective measures are taken to exterminate those sinister and shadowy twentieth-century freebooters at the very root.

The spirit of conciliation should likewise be the basis for all world efforts in favour of peace. Costa Rica assigns a leading role to peace in the life of everyone. For the Costa Rican people this highest of values is solidly founded on the fruitful basis of democracy. It is the focal point of our national life and the basic element in our foreign policy. It was in the belief that education for peace represents one of the principal instruments for guaranteeing the future of our species that we proposed the creation of the University for Peace, based in Costa Roca, which is now celebrating its tenth anniversary and to whose charter, approved by the General Assembly, we urge all Member States to adhere.

International public opinion has repeatedly raised the question of peace dividends, which Costa Rica views as a matter of high priority. With the easing of East-West tensions numerous items in the military budgets of the super-Powers are, fortunately, now destined to dwindle or disappear. Disarmament, which at times appeared to be an empty concept or a romantic illusion, is now taking on vibrant momentum and should become firmly entrenched in its rightful place.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

Over a period of many years Costa Rica has been the beneficiary of substantial peace dividends. It has never possessed nuclear or chemical weapons nor does it ever wish to do so. It does not have an army, nor does it wish to have an army. We are an underdeveloped country with a high level of debt, but the resources we have available are invested in health, education, housing and development, not in tanks or fighter planes. As we have said on numerous occasions, we respect the right of other nations to possess armed forces, but we consider it unjustifiable that such forces should consume all their existing assets, even those they do not actually possess, while a large proportion of the world's population remains in poverty.

Costa Rica considers it to be indispensable that nuclear testing cease and that all weapons designed for mass destruction be eliminated. We would also urge all Member States to support the efforts under way within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament with respect to the prohibition of the development, production, acquisition and use of chemical weapons.

However, Costa Rica also believes that disarmament negotiations should also address the matter of conventional weapons, whose destructive potential and cost have significantly increased in recent years. In that respect my delegation wishes to stress the significance of the round of negotiations currently being held by the five Central American countries on matters of security and of the control and limitation of armaments, with the valuable assistance of the United Nations. We believe that regional disarmament negotiations, which should include, in any event, the elaboration of reliable verification mechanisms, can constitute an appropriate means of reducing the stockpiling of arms and the size of armed forces. In the case of third world countries that would unquestionably make available substantial resources that could be used for economic and social development.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

However, it is also necessary for the developed world to co-operate in achieving those objectives, through special programmes of co-operation for those underdeveloped countries that are implementing an effective programme of disarmament and reduced military spending. In the opinion of Costa Rica, if a portion of the peace dividend should be devoted to co-operation with the third world, preferential treatment should be given to those underdeveloped countries that are making progress in the sphere of disarmament and reduced military spending. We consider that it is not only fair but appropriate that these processes be encouraged by special co-operation incentives.

(Mr. Niehaus-Quesada, Costa Rica)

It is alarming to see that countries with low levels of economic and social development spend up to one quarter of their national budget on military hardware and yet, when it comes to co-operation, they receive the same treatment as nations with extremely low military budgets. If the Governments of developed countries wish to close the breach with the third world, it is time they decided - by means of a formal treaty, which could be drawn up within the Organization - to orient co-operation principally towards those countries effectively on the road to arms reduction. Costa Rica believes it to be unfair that when assigning assistance, identical reasoning is applied to a country spending its resources on hospitals, highways or schools and to those investing their funds in weaponry. Furthermore, my country feels that the developed world should similarly actively promote a policy designed to eradicate or reduce as much as possible the sale of weapons to the third world, particularly to the poorest nations or those most afflicted by violence.

Today, disarmament is not only a moral imperative but has become an indispensable condition to guarantee the survival of mankind. By implementing effective disarmament processes, not only will we make available immense economic and human resources for food, health, education and social welfare, but a contribution will be made towards world peace. The international adventurism and threats to peace and world security from which the world has suffered on so many occasions can only be stopped if arms stockpiling is stopped.

The Organization has dedicated the last decade of the century to international law. In the opinion of Costa Rica, the best method to guarantee the supremacy of that law is to eliminate the means to break it. Only to the extent that substantial progress is made in the disarmament process, rational limits are imposed on the manufacture and sale of weapons and the illicit sale of arms is effectively impeded, will the rule of international legal standards be

(Mr. Niehaus-Quesada, Costa Rica)

strengthened. That will at the same time consolidate the central role to be played by the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

However, international law not only regulates the conduct of nations among themselves. International law has focused a considerable portion of its content on the protection of the inherent rights of man. Consequently the decade of international law also involves a decade dedicated to human rights.

It is gratifying to all of us to be able to recognize that the democratic upsurge that has been taking place in the world has translated into a greater respect for human rights, particularly with respect to civil and political rights. We believe that conditions are favourable for international human-rights protection agencies to intensify their activities and broaden their spheres of action. In that respect, Costa Rica strongly urges those Member States that have not done so to join the international human rights agreements and take the steps required to guarantee full compliance with them. Furthermore, it is necessary that people become familiar with their rights and realize that they are not gracious concessions granted by Governments. A daily experience of respect for human rights is the best method of guaranteeing harmony within a State and the growth in that State of the vigorous and indestructible roots of democracy.

Nevertheless, the panorama with respect to human rights in certain cases continues to be of concern. We are deeply concerned over the human rights situation in Liberia. In South Africa, despite the evolving process, the truth is that the apartheid system continues to impose absurd and odious discrimination. Costa Rica, which several years ago broke off all relations with the Pretoria régime, reiterates its repugnance for any form of racial discrimination and urges the South African authorities to take steps in the near future for the immediate elimination of apartheid.

(Mr. Niehaus-Quesada, Costa Rica)

My country is also concerned over the disregard for the human rights of the Palestinians and the incessant violance reigning in Lebanon. No matter how complex the Middle East problem may be, no matter how difficult it may be to balance the elements, we believe that any formula for a solution requires the implementation by all parties involved of an effective policy of respect for human rights, particularly civil and political rights.

With respect to human rights, the Government of Costa Rica is deeply concerned over a situation that exists on a world scale. The right to life, granted by the principal international human rights instruments, inevitably includes the right to live in a habitable world. However, the activities of mankind are daily making the exercise of that right an ever-increasing illusion. If the threat of a nuclear holocaust causes concern, the threat of a planetary ecological catastrophe is much more tangible and imminent. In the most irresponsible manner, humanity is dedicated to destroying its environment and severely compromising its very existence as a species. As is true with actions affecting international peace and security, those endangering ecological security in any part of the world are of concern to all of us, because they affect all of us, they harm all of us and destroy all of us. If the international law of our times recognizes more strongly every day that respect for human rights cannot be considered a matter of the exclusive internal competence of each State, that should be particularly emphasized when we refer to environmental rights.

Costa Rica believes that the time has come to direct our energies towards a new international ecological order. There are almost 150 international agreements on the matter, but very few are directed towards the prevention of environmental destruction processes. There are huge gaps also with respect to definitions, verification and many other related matters.

(Mr. Niehaus-Quesada, Costa Rica)

The idea of a new international ecological order is the product of our conviction that we are no longer in a position to accept isolated efforts. It is necessary to unite and to develop international standards on all fronts in that field. We must, as soon as possible, design and implement more effective multilateral strategies to preserve our environment. In that respect, Costa Rica believes that the United Nations should give priority attention to environmental matters. We have observed with great interest the proposal made by the Soviet Union to organize a world environmental monitoring and control system, which would include on-site verification mechanisms. We consider that, after a careful inventory is taken of ecological problems, such a system would open the door to intense activity aimed at saving our resources. We are also of the opinion that an international environmental monitoring and control system should work on the basis of specific time limits for nations to implement the resolutions formulated in the ecological field, and sanctions against those nations which persist in non-compliance. We repeat that threats to ecological security should be regarded as one more aspect of threats to international security.

In that regard, we believe that sanctions that may be agreed upon by the Security Council should be imposed in those cases in which ecological security is endangered. We also feel that Member States should report periodically to the United Nations regarding the measures they have taken to preserve the environment, to promote international co-operation in that field and, in particular, to encourage environmental education at all levels. As is true with peace and human rights, for man to value his environment he must be taught from infancy that he has important duties and responsibilites to himself, to his fellow man and to future generations in that respect.

(Mr. Niehaus-Quesada, Costa Rica)

Costa Rica attributes significant importance to the Conference on the Environment and Development scheduled for 1992. Nevertheless, we believe that as of now concrete measures can be implemented to foster the solution of world and regional ecological problems, based on shared responsibilities. Not for nothing did the Declaration of Stockholm state in 1972 that in under-developed countries the majority of environmental problems are caused by under-development itself. The possibilities of using resources diverted from military budgets towards their solution should be another of the dividends brought about by peace. We should not wait until 1992 to expound universally valid responses to those anguishing problems.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

In 1992 the process of the new Europe will also reach its culmination. For many decades the European Community has been constructing one of the most prosperous societies in history, within a framework of democracy and freedom. The reunification of Germany, vastly accelerated since the fall of the wall of shame, will doubtless contribute, starting next week, to an unprecedented boost to the process of the European Community. Likewise in 1992 will occur the fifth centenary of the day on which the destinies of America and Europe crossed to give a complete perspective of the world. The proximity of this anniversary should induce us to reformulate the bonds which join not only America and Europe but also the developed world and the underdeveloped nations.

We all form the crew of a single ship. We must be committed to unity. We shall have made no progress at all if ideological blocs disappear only to be replaced by economic blocs. International peace and security should be seen not only in military terms. A firm peace should be a fertile global peace, one in which we all co-operate and reciprocate with respect to progress and development.

The Assembly is meeting at a crucial time in the history of mankind. The world is at a crossroads. If we are here it is because we have faith in the fact that the international community will be capable of continuing on the road of reason. Costa Rica, a peace-loving country and a country that practises peace, a country that shares the values sustaining this Organization, today wishes to reiterate its firm belief that the United Nations will be able to bring to fruition, for our times and for future generations, the ideal of a peace based on law.

In 1979 Rafael Angel Calderon Fournier, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and today President of Costa Rica, stated in this very forum concepts which are today more valid than ever and which my delegation wishes to see shared by all nations represented here:

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

"The United Nations will survive in so far as its nations mirror the trust of the world's peoples and their hope for a more just society.

"To keep that faith without faltering is a task incumbent upon us all, especially upon those of us who believe that this is the last hope the Almighty has granted us to find peace and ensure the survival of the human race." (A/34/PV.19, p. 111)

Mr. RIVERA IRIAS (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Guatemala, I wish to extend to Mr. de Marco most cordial congratulations on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at the forty-fifth session.

On behalf of the Government of Guatemala, I wish to say that we are very pleased at the admission to the United Nations of Namibia and Liechtenstein as full-fledged Members, since this reinforces the principle of universality of our Organization.

I should also like to place on record the profound appreciation of the people and the Government of Guatemala to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his constant efforts in the search for peace and the strengthening of democracy in Central America and other parts of the world.

I cannot fail to state how pleased the Government of Guatemala is at the new climate of dialogue and well-conceived co-operation that has been generated by the attitude of the United States and the Soviet Union and the very important fact for Europe and the world at large of the achievement of a united Germany, which could be a decisive factor for world peace. In the same context, we wish to underscore the importance of the process of democratization in Eastern Europe.

We recognize the special relevance of the World Summit for Children, and we are pleased to state that the Government of Guatemala signed the Convention on the

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Rights of the Child when it was opened to signature and ratified it before its entry into force.

The Government of President Cerezo has reiterated its faith in the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its political will to co-operate resolutely in this world forum towards the achievement of the highest values it has enshrined for mankind, such as peace, freedom and justice. He has also reaffirmed his commitment to the defence and promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and promotion of complete and harmonized development for all poor countries.

The Government of Guatemala also reiterates its full support for the principles of international law governing relations among States: basically, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention, the legal equality of States, peaceful, just and negotiated settlement of international disputes and political and ideological pluralism, as bases for a democratically organized community of nations.

I believe that, if political and economic relations among States were to be governed effectively by the principles enshrined in international law, which we have fully accepted in theory and enshrined in a large number of international instruments, there would be no hotbeds of tension and instability such as those that cause us to experience precarious peace with a constant danger of losing that peace.

My Government is convinced that peace, the highest aspiration of mankind, is the result, both domestically and internationally, of firm political will on the part of nations to achieve such peace through measures and agreements that basically seek reconciliation, tolerance, mutual respect and, above all, social justice. I believe deeply that only democracy as a system of government provides us with the basis and appr priate framework to seek peace, but democracy understood as a value and as a norm of conduct which is invariable, backed up in law and by a

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solid set of principles that fully guarantee the enjoyment of all freedoms. The most important challenge that has been confronted by the Government of Guatemala has been precisely that of strengthening democracy.

Since the beginning of his mandate, which coincided with the entry into force of the present political constitution of the country, President Cerezo has established in the country a government oriented basically towards meeting the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population, which had traditionally been forgotten and left on the sidelines. The people since then have enjoyed all freedoms, which they have exercised fully through the strengthening of people's organizations, whose legitimate aspirations form part of our national priorities, reflected specifically in programmes directed towards meeting their most urgent needs.

Dialogue has been intensified through forums for reconciliation, in which sectors convinced that dialogue is the only way to make progress politically are progressively participating. President Cerezo has demonstrated in practice what democracy is all about and has never resorted to coercive measures to resolve the political and social problems that he has had to confront throughout his administration.

We are now in an open electoral process, a process that is free, pluralistic and participative and that will culminate, on 11 November, with the general elections. These elections are to take place in a democratic environment in which the political parties carry out their campaigns without any constraints. In order to strengthen the transparency of the electoral process, the Organization of American States has been invited to send observers, and also a large number of Governments of various parts of the world will be testifying to the honesty and cleanness of the elections.

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The National Commission of Reconciliation of Guatemala, in the framework of the Esquipulas II Agreements, with the full support of the Guatemalan Government, took the initiative of promoting a process of dialogue between the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and the various political, management and religious sectors and people's representatives, as well as with the Government of the Republic, in order to find a political solution to our national problems, a solution that allows for reconciliation among Guatemalans and that therefore provides total peace for the country.

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This process of dialogue began in Oslo at the end of March this year between the delegates of the National Commission of Reconciliation of Guatemala and those of the URNG. They continued at Madrid in June with representatives of political parties from Guatemala, and at Ottawa at the beginning of September, with talks between the URNG and the private sector. A meeting is also planned to be held in Quito between the URNG and the religious sectors of the country, as well as a meeting with the trade union sectors.

This process of dialogue is the result of a national consensus, which is why it has been given the support of the Guatemalan population and of the international community.

I should like to underscore and thank the Secretary-General for his resolute support for this process of dialogue in which he has participated as an observer, thus giving the process greater credibility and confidence as regards the commitments that have been achieved.

The Guatemalan Government also expresses its appreciation to the Governments of Norway, Spain, Canada and Ecuador for their contribution to this process.

The Central American region has in the past few decades been confronted with situations of crisis, instability and violence that have been an obstacle to its progress and that have meant the loss of valuable lives.

On more than one occasion the results of the paths chosen by our Presidents to promote peace, democracy and security in Central America have been called into question. May I none the less say how very deeply pleased we are at the all important progress achieved towards the implementation of the peace agreement signed by the Central American Presidents, which has made it possible to see that, in spite of the long and difficult path followed, the obstacles encountered and the historic responsibility called for by the task, efforts have not been in vain and are yielding fruit.

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Proof of this can be found in the truly democratic political processes recently conducted in fraternal countries of the region, in the internal dialogue among irregular forces and Governments of Central American countries towards helping establish domestic peace and strengthening national reconciliation.*

We are pleased at the progress made in negotiations on security, verification, and the control and limitation of armaments in accordance with the Esquipulas II Agreements, and we trust that this will make it possible to reorient resources towards the development of Central America.

These efforts on the part of the Governments of the region should be joined by those of the international community, which should give its support for the achievement of peace, stability and democracy in Central America. The actions of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States in respect of the peace process constitute unprecedented advances. The important diplomatic work done by the Contadora Group and its Support Group with a view to arriving at a peaceful, negotiated solution for peace and democracy and at reducing tension deserves our fullest appreciation.

We are also grateful to other countries that have supported us throughout the process. The European Community, for its part, has, through the institutionalization of interregional relations, shown its readiness to support efforts to put an end to violence and instability in the Central American region.

Against this background of improved political prospects for the region, and convinced that Central American presidential gatherings are an appropriate means for analysing and making decisions at the highest political level of our peoples, the Presidents of Central America welcomed the proposal of President

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* The President returned to the Chair.

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Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo to hold an economic summit that would make it possible to deal with the grave economic and social situation of Central America.

We believe that this presidential meeting will be the beginning of a second stage of the Esquipulas II process, in which the peace dividends will make it possible to reorient efforts and resources towards the expansion of our economies and the well-being of our peoples.

The Central American Presidents took extremely important decisions in order to reorient the process of integration of the region as a means to achieving development, to achieve the inclusion of Central America in global economic, financial and technological trends, and to support and co-ordinate sectoral policy to promote economic growth, and to make it possible to bring social benefits to the people.

In this context and in accordance with the request of the Central American Presidents for international assistance towards complementing our efforts, we Central Americans, who have already taken the initiative in choosing our path, must now reassess the support that the international community provides and offers to the region in order to make optimal use of that aid and to reorient it to the actual needs of the region in fulfilment of the presidential agreements.

In this respect, the aid granted to the region by the European Community within the framework of co-operation signed in Luxembourg between the two regions in 1985 and aimed at social and economic development projects in the region deserves our attention.

We agree with the new direction taken for community co-operation in support of the reactivation, restructuring and strengthening of the process of economic integration in Central America. This is reflected in the plan for the establishment of a regional system of payments, which will give new impetus to intraregional trade.

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Furthermore, the plan for special co-operation for Central America, the PEC, which arose in response to the appeal of the Central American Presidents at their summit meeting at Esquipulas II in order to obtain from the international community special support for the peace and development of the region should be promoted and adjusted to the actual requirements of the region in fulfilment of the Antigua commitments. In this context, the plan must continue and be given financial resources from the United Nations Development Programme so that it may be able to continue to function.

We believe that other initiatives for co-operation with the region should be considered, such as the initiatives presented by Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela - the Group of Three - the initiative of the International Commission for the Recovery and Development of Central America.

Furthermore, in support of political changes which have taken place in Latin America and the Caribbean, the President of the United States of America recently announced a new programme for economic and financial relations between the United States and the Latin American and Caribbean region, known as the Initiative for the Americas. This is clearly an opportunity to promote the region's prosperity and form a new American community. In principle, Central America has expressed its satisfaction at the prospects for this proposal, which we believe will help fulfil the agreements reached by the Central American Presidents in the plan of action adopted at their Antigua meeting. Guatemala has also reacted to the offer to support the protection of the environment by a mechanism for the exchange of bilateral debt for development projects.

Central America must react positively to such an initiative. None the less it must use as its terms of reference the results of the Latin American countries which have already progressed in their negotiations in this direction. We must consider a joint strategy on the basis of its political and economic potential,

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and recognize that, as a bloc of countries, it will have better possibilities for facing future challenges in regard to economic, financial and trade matters and greater power of negotiation in the international context.

It is important to highlight the validity, as of 1 May 1990, of the treaty establishing the Central American Parliament and other political bodies. The Parliament constitutes an institutional mechanism of a permanent nature for the strengthening of pluralist dialogue and democracy as fundamental elements for peace in the region.

The Central American Parliament will also help promote and strengthen the process of Central American integration and encourage the broadest co-operation among member countries.

The policy of the Guatemalan Government in respect of human rights is firm and well defined. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities have been examining the situation of human rights in Guatemala and have adopted resolutions in this regard. While it is true that those bodies have expressed their concern at the human rights situation in my country, it is also true that they have recognized the efforts being made by President Cerezo's administration towards promoting and guaranteeing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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Furthermore, both the Commission and the Sub-Committee and, in general, the international community, are aware that there is no policy of violation of human rights in Guatemala. The Government of President Cerezo, therefore, reiterates, in this world forum, its unswerving commitment to respect human rights completely and to ensure their full exercise. The Government of Guatemala is therefore quite ready to continue to co-operate with the Commission and other serious bodies that have a genuine concern for human rights in our country, but we do reject the unjust campaign of disinformation that certain biased sectors are trying to conduct in an attempt to harass and single out Guatemala by painting an alarming picture of the human rights situation that does not in any way correspond to the reality.

Millions of human beings are wandering all over the world, victims of armed conflicts in their countries; others are victims of natural disasters; and others have left their homes because it has been impossible for them to rise above the poverty into which they were born. I am referring to refugees and displaced persons. The work of the United Nations through its High Commissioner for Refugees deserves our recognition. The Central American Governments are aware of the need to resolve this problem and to ensure to all Central Americans who return to their homes suitable conditions for their reintegration into national life. Guatemala feels encouraged to pursue this effort to solve the problem and it is grateful for the international support it has received. We are aware of the difficulties that need to be overcome, but we have the political will to resolve them and we declare once again the right of all Guatemalans living abroad to return to their homeland in conditions of freedom, security and respect for their human rights, so that they may be able to participate actively in national life.

The Government of Guatemala is deeply concerned at the production and consumption of drugs and the illicit traffic in them. We have therefore taken a series of internal measures to combat this scourge. At the hemispheric level, we

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consider it necessary to strengthen the powers of the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse Control, since all possible action must be taken to combat the ills related to drug trafficking. At the global level, my Government was one of the first to sign the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which was adopted in Vienna at the end of 1988. It is my pleasure to report that we shall soon be ratifying that Convention.

In short, both at the national and at the international level, the Government of Guatemala has maintained its unswerving resolve to fight openly against drug trafficking, since this is an extremely serious problem, one which constitutes a threat not only to peace but also to the stability of our institutions and our societies.

The Government of Guatemala considers it necessary to establish, at the international level, mechanisms of co-operation for the rational use of natural resources, the control of pollution and the restoration of the ecological balance.

We believe that poverty and the deterioration of the environment are closely interrelated and that it is necessary therefore to bear in mind the fact that protection of the environmert constitutes an integral part of the development process. In this context, we fully support the decision of the United Nations to hold a conference, at the highest possible level, on the environment and development in Brazil, in June 1992.

In order for peace to be lasting, it is necessary to encourage social development and the adoption of measures for the enhancement of the economic well-being of the neediest sectors of society. The situation that now prevails of differences between rich and poor nations can be seen, to a greater or a lesser degree, in all societies. It is time to place the well-being and advancement of human beings at the centre of all our activities.

(Mr. Rivera Irias, Guatemala)

The economic situation throughout the world continues to be adverse to the economic and social development of the developing countries. Guatemala is now facing one of the most severe economic crises in its history. That same situation prevails throughout the entire Central American region and the developing world at large. No short-term solution is in sight. The situation seems to worsen day after day. Foreign debt and its servicing have made an already difficult situation worse. The magnitude and seriousness of this problem require a broad and resolute approach, since this constitutes a grave threat to the political, social and economic order of many countries.

It is a matter of concern that in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations the interests and concerns of the weakest developing countries are not being taken sufficiently into account. The objective of these negotiations should be to benefit all nations and to provide developing countries with access to existing trade blocs and also to new markets. Therefore, the needs of the developing countries must be duly taken into account.

Guatemala considers that the United Nations is the appropriate forum in which to seek just solutions to shared problems, particularly in the economic field. There is a need for understanding and co-operation on the part of the economically stronger countries. It is urgent and necessary to continue a serious and constructive dialogue between developed and developing countries. It is unfortunate that the efforts made by the Group of 77 at the multilateral level have encountered obstacles that are difficult to overcome. No significant progress was achieved at the special session devoted to international economic co-operation and, in particular, to the reactivation of economic growth and the development of the developing countries. We are therefore pleased at the decision to hold a special session of the Economic and Social Council at the ministerial level next year.

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This decision revitalizes that important body of the United Nations and will make it possible to set new policy guidelines in the economic and social sphere in the new context in which we are living.

International peace and security have been endangered once again in the already torn region of the Middle East. Guatemala views with deep concern the conflict which arose on 2 August last when the armed forces of Iraq occupied the territory of Kuwait, forces which still remain there. Since the beginning of this conflict the Security Council has done work of an unprecedented nature. The agreement of the permanent members of the Security Council to go beyond ideological differences has made it possible for them to agree on measures that emphasize the rule of law, respect for international law and for the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, norms which all States that cherish peace must respect.

Guatemala supports the collective measures adopted by the Council to prevent new threats to the peace and to eliminate existing ones through the application of measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. Guatemala has taken the necessary steps for full implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council since the beginning of the conflict instigated by Iraq. We appeal to the Iraqi Government to desist from its attitude. Guatemala rejects any action aimed at the annexation of Kuwait and reiterates its appeal to Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. Guatemala encourages the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue his tireless work of good offices aimed at the peaceful settlement of this conflict. Guatemala condemns the entry into and search of accredited diplomatic headquarters in Kuwait and considers unacceptable the use of civilian and diplomatic personnel as hostages.

As stated by President Cerezo in this forum last year, Guatemala recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence in their

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own territory, which does not compromise or affect the existence of the State of Israel within its borders as recognized by the United Nations. We are convinced that a political and negotiated solution to the problem of Palestine will certainly be a step towards a solution to the problem of the Middle East.

The situation in Lebanon does not seem to be improving. The civil war continues to take lives and to render increasingly difficult the economic situation of the population. Guatemala appeals to the parties to the conflict to desist from their hostile attitude and to take conciliatory measures that could make it possible to establish the confidence necessary for negotiation and dialogue and to put an end to a war which has taken so many lives and which has caused so much suffering in that country.

(Mr. Rivera Irias, Guatemala)

Peace-keeping operations will undoubtedly contribute to the reduction of budgets devoted to total destruction and to the arms race. The moral force of the United Nations is an additional guarantee of the transparency required for the peace process. It is also the most appropriate way to involve the international community in the restoration of international peace and security. Certainly this cannot be a solution to an existing problem, but it provides the time necessary for the reduction of tension and for the promotion of the mutual confidence-building measures that are necessary if we are to lay the foundations of a lasting and stable peace.

Central America itself has benefited from these operations through the work done in the region by the United Nations Observer Group through the work of the International Support and Verification Commission in the process of demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance. It is a source of deep pride that, for the first time in history, we see United Nations operations promoting the total destruction of weapons.

One region that could benefit from peace-keeping operations is South-East Asia, where there are encouraging signs of a peaceful solution. We support the efforts being made by the Association of South-East Asian Nations to achieve a negotiated political solution to the conflict in Cambodia. We hope that the Paris Conference will be resumed so that the Khmer people may be enabled at last to enjoy peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United Nations has been called upon to participate in the referendum that is to be held to resolve the conflict of Western Sahara. Guatemala welcomes the joint agreement, the timetable and the plan approved in June by the Security Council. The referendum seems to be the most feasible means of resolving the Sahraoui conflict, and Guatemala supports the work done by the United Nations in this regard.

(Mr. Rivera Irias, Guatemala)

Events in southern Africa deserve mention. We are very pleased at the liberation of Nelson Mandela and at the beginning of dialogue in South Africa. None the less, we note with concern that the complete and unconditional abolition of the odious system of apartheid practised by the South African Government is being delayed. There can be no peace, nor can there be development, without the total abolition of apartheid as a system of government.

The Guatemalan Government views with profound gratification the dialogue that has begun between North Korea and South Korea with a view to reconciliation and the reunification of the Korean peninsula. This intra-Korean dialogue contributes to détente and to the promotion of global peace. Guatemala believes that, within the United Nations principle of universality, it is appropriate that South Korea and North Korea be admitted to the Organization, within whose framework more significant progress in the process of dialogue between the two Koreas, with a view to ending confrontation and achieving unification, is feasible.

Guatemala supports the efforts being made by the United Nations in the global disarmament campaign and associates itself with the appeal for the investment in the economic and social development of developing countries of all the funds released by the reduction of nuclear arsenals. Guatemala, as a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, supports efforts to prohibit tests of all types of weapons of mass destruction and supports the use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes of benefit to all mankind.

Guatemala supports the talks that the Government of the fraternal Republic of El Salvador, within the framework of the Esquipulas II agreement, is conducting with the armed opposition in that country. It is our hope that Salvadorans will find a negotiated political solution that can put an end to a decade of destruction and polarization in their society.

(Mr. Rivera Irias, Guatemala)

Guatemala supports Haiti's request that the United Nations organize an observer group for the elections that are to be held in that country. We hope that the Haitian people will achieve the peace and internal reconciliation for which they yearn, enabling them to exercise freely their civil and political rights.

In an effort to contribute to the important work of the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Guatemalan delegation has submitted a new item for consideration at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. This item will be considered by the Sixth Committee. It is a draft of conciliation rules, whose objective is to promote the use of conciliation as an ad hoc means of resolving disputes between States. We believe that this may help the United Nations in its efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security.

For reasons of State relating to the electoral process that is taking place in our country, President Cerezo could not be here. However, he asked me to convey to you, Mr. President, his warmest greetings and his best wishes for the success of the Assembly's deliberations, as well as his solidarity with the decisions that are adopted in the search for peaceful and just solutions to the grave political, economic and social problems afflicting all mankind.

May God be with you.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.